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FOR VALOUR

THREE TALES OF HEROISM BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

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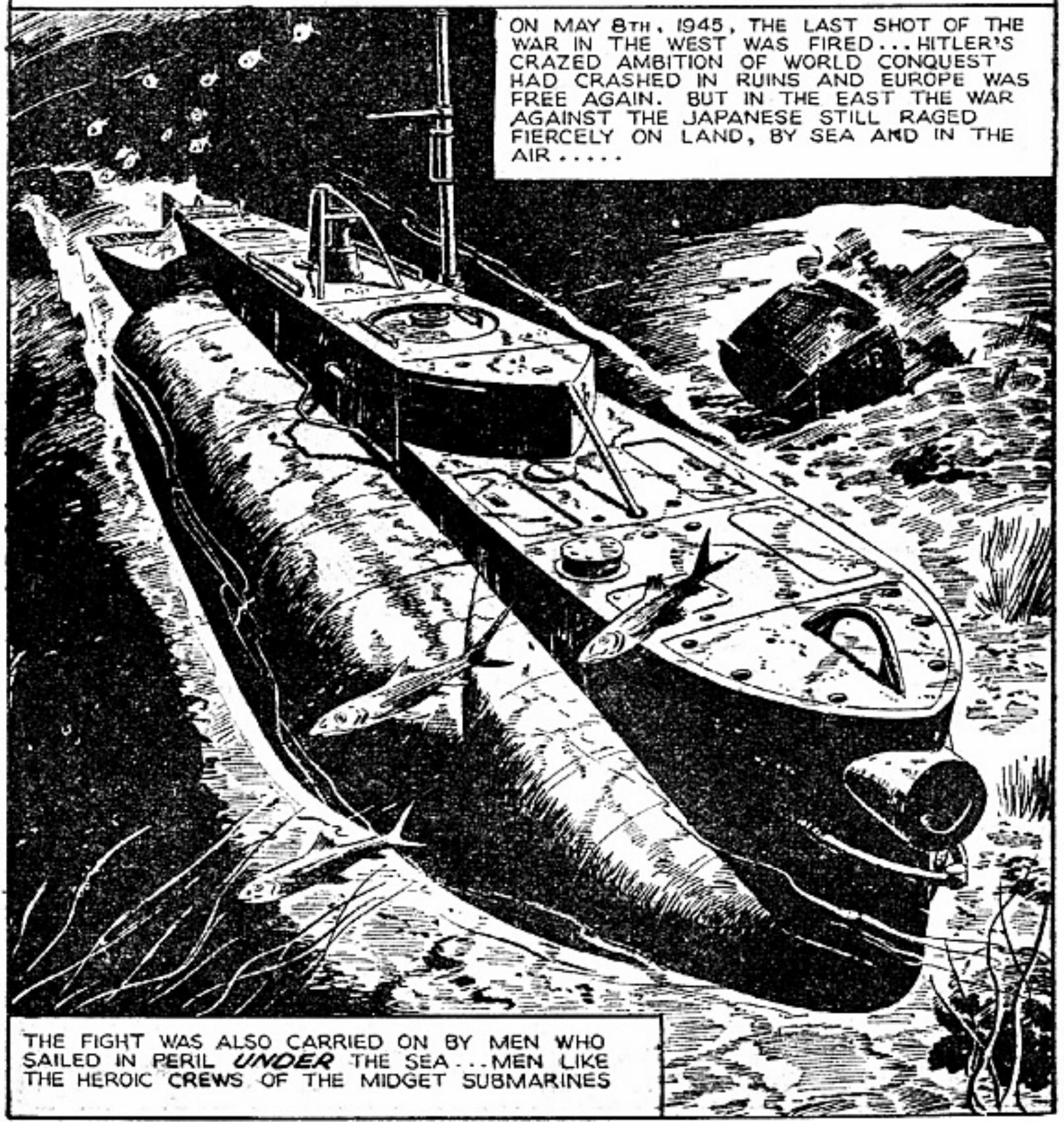
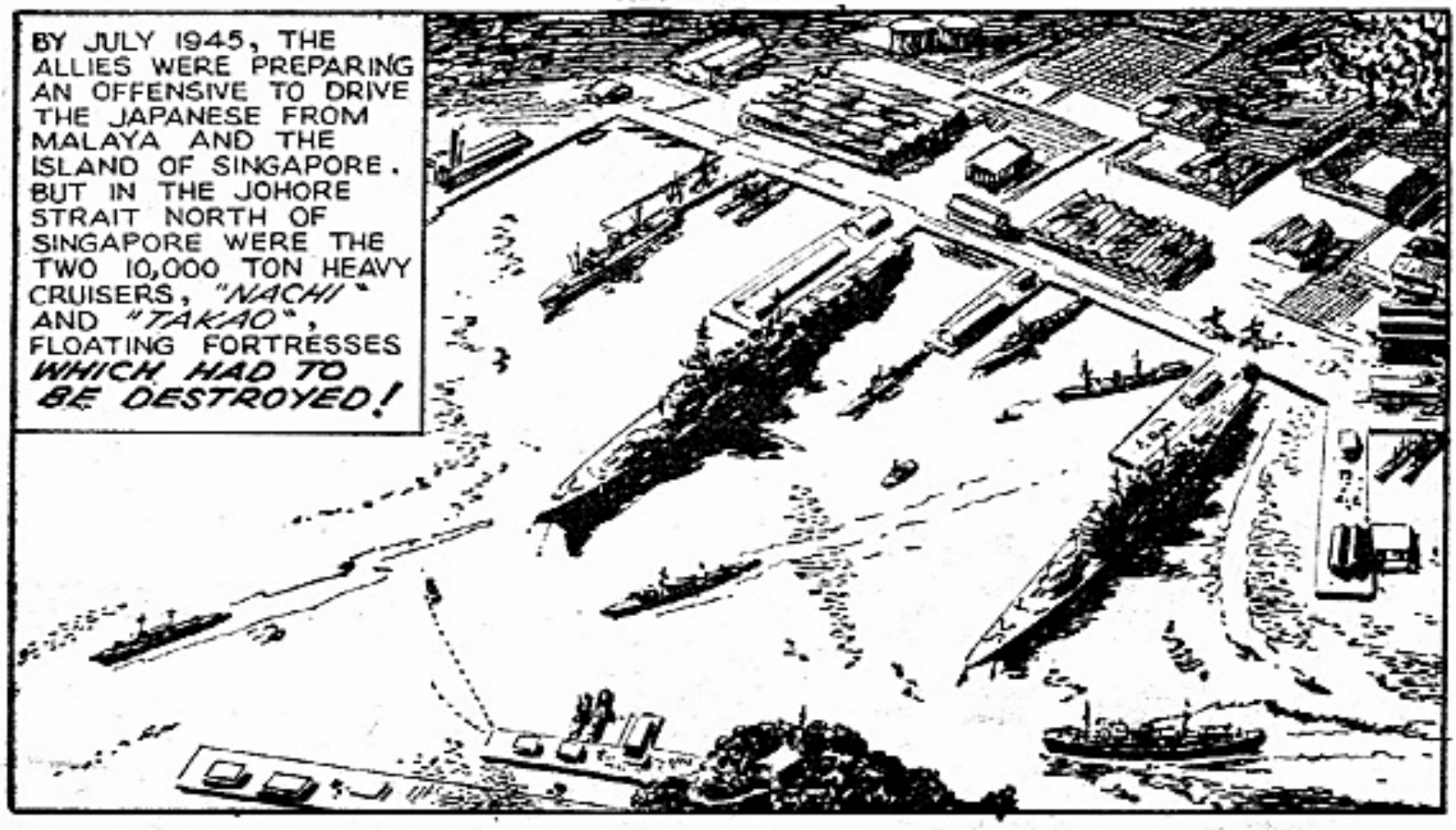
DOWN PERISCOPE




BY JULY 1945, THE ALLIES WERE PREPARING AN OFFENSIVE TO DRIVE THE JAPANESE FROM MALAYA AND THE ISLAND OF SINGAPORE. BUT IN THE JOHORE STRAIT NORTH OF SINGAPORE WERE THE TWO 10,000 TON HEAVY CRUISERS, "NACHI" AND "TAKAO", FLOATING FORTRESSES WHICH HAD TO BE DESTROYED!

TWO MIDGET SUBMARINES WERE DETAILED TO ATTACK THE CRUISERS. XE.3 WAS GIVEN "TAKAO" AND XE.6 "NACHI". AT SIX O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING OF JULY 30, THE CREW OF XE.3 CLIMBED INTO A RUBBER DINGHY FROM THE SUBMARINE "STYGIAN."
SO LONG, TICH... AND GOOD LUCK. WE'LL BE HERE TO PICK YOU UP AS ARRANGED.
THANKS FOR THE LIFT. WE'LL SEE YOU IN A COUPLE OF DAYS OR SO.

THE CAPTAIN OF XE.3 WAS LIEUTENANT IAN FRASER, D.S.C., R.N.R., KNOWN TO ALL AS "TICH".
EVERYTHING OKAY?
I THINK SO, TICH. SHE'S HANDLED WELL ON THE TOW FROM BORNEO. NO REAL PROBLEMS.

THE THREE CREW MEMBERS WERE SUB-LIEUTENANT "KIWI" SMITH, A NEW ZEALANDER; ENGINE-ROOM ARTIFICER REED, AND LEADING SEAMAN "MICK" MAGENNIS, A THICKSET, MUSCULAR IRISHMAN. THE HATCH WAS CLOSED. AND FRASER GAVE HIS FIRST ORDER.
"STYGIAN" IS UNDER WAY. STAND BY TO DIVE.
AYE, AYE, SIR. READY FOR DIVING, SIR.

SILENTLY THE LITTLE FIFTY FOOT LONG SUBMARINE SANK BENEATH THE SURFACE, TOWED BY THE "STYGIAN". THEY WERE FORTY MILES FROM THEIR TARGET... THE "TAKAO".

AT ELEVEN O'CLOCK THAT NIGHT, THE TWO SUBMARINES SURFACED AND THE NYLON TOW CABLE WAS SLIPPED...
FULL AHEAD... STEER TWO-FOUR-O. THIS IS IT, CHAPS. WE'RE OFF THE EAST END OF JOHORE STRAIT. KEEP YOUR FINGERS CROSSED... WE'RE ON OUR OWN NOW!

CAUTIOUSLY THE XE.3 PUSHED FORWARD THROUGH THE TROPIC SEA TOWARDS SINGAPORE ... THEN, SUDDENLY ..

GREAT GUNS! JAPS!

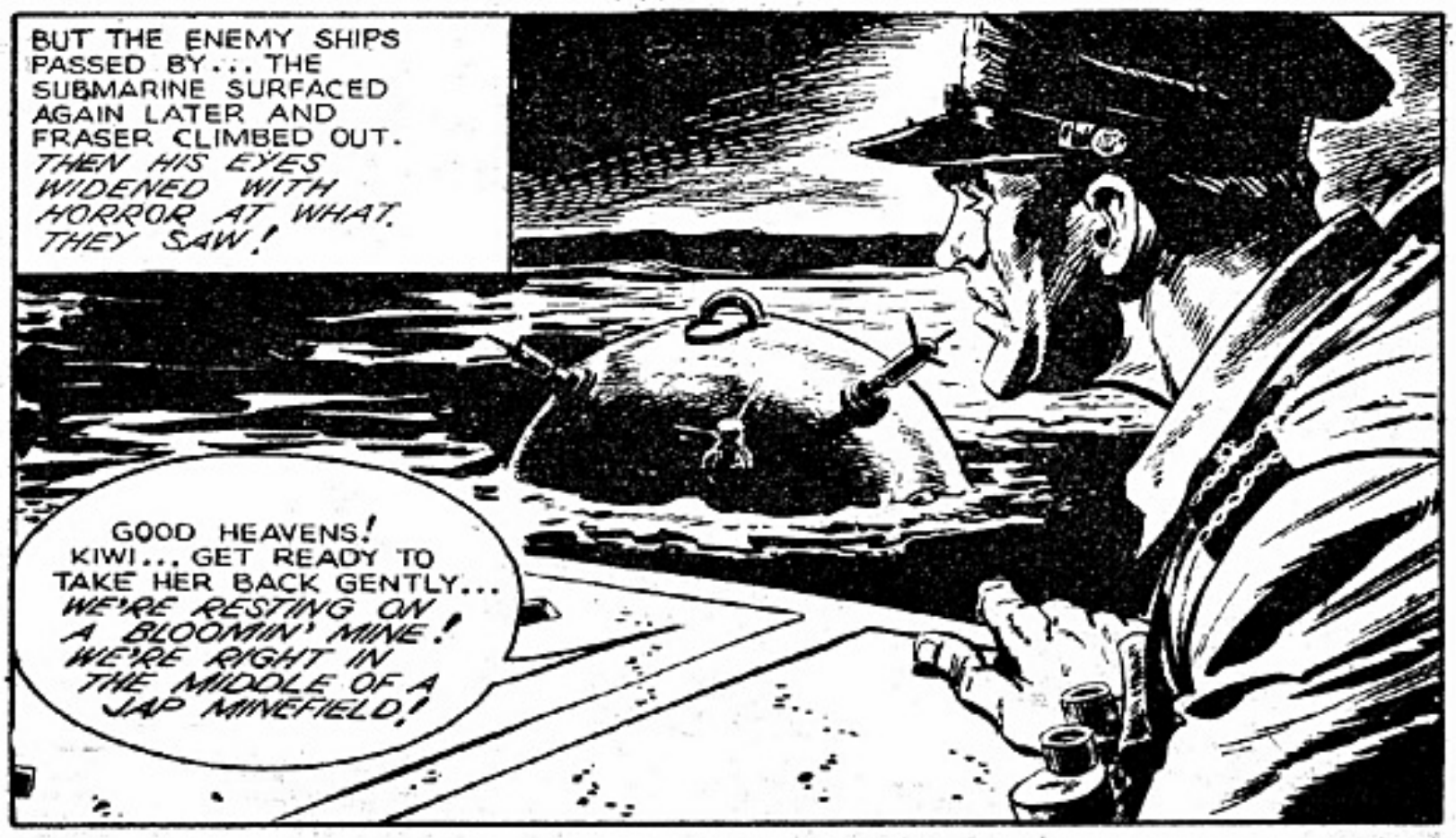
TICH FRASER DROPPED BELOW AND SLAMMED THE HATCH!

DIVE, DIVE, DIVE! THERE'S A TANKER AND AN ARMED ESCORT COMING RIGHT FOR US!

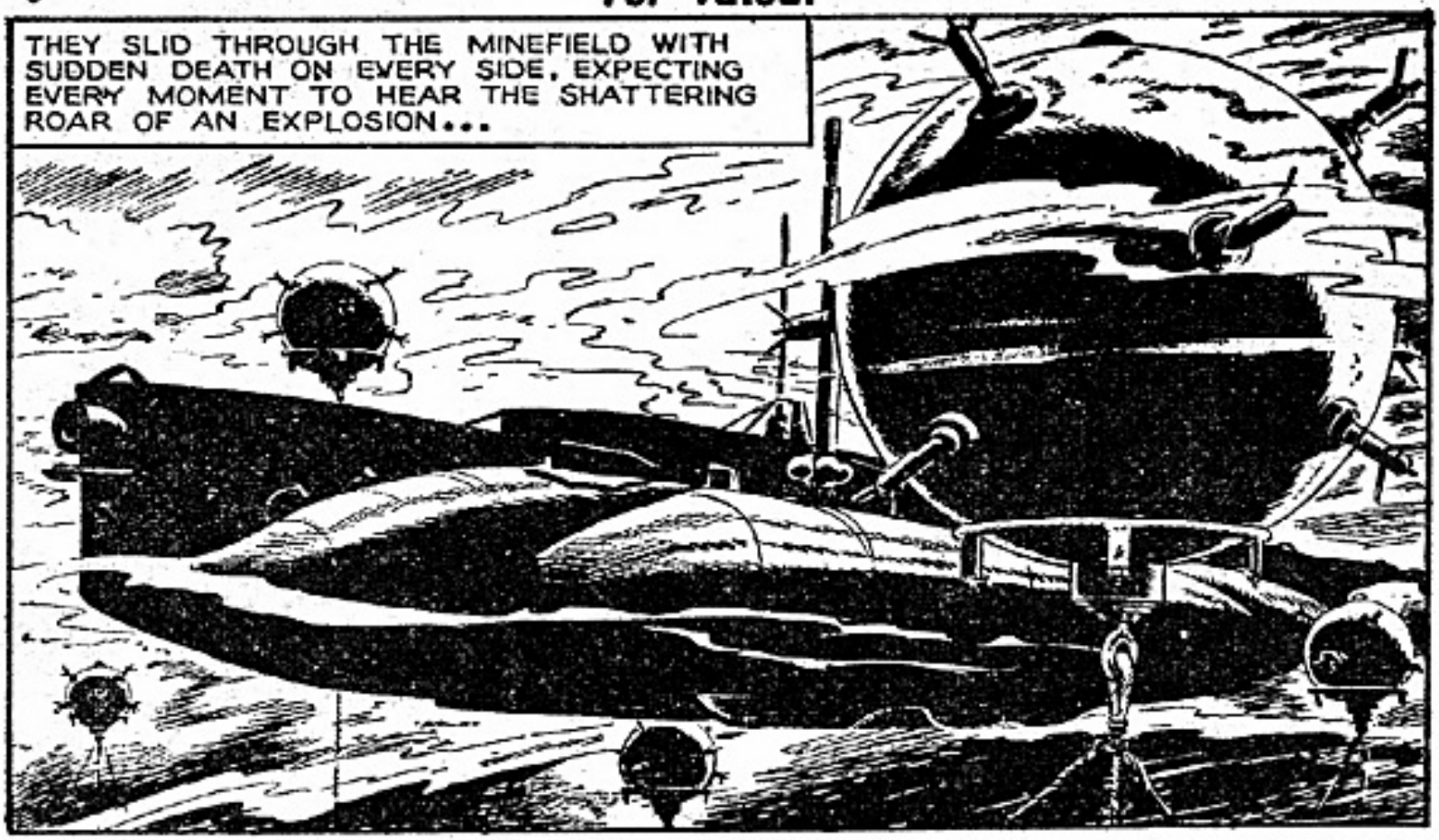
REED SLAMMED OVER THE LEVERS WHICH FLOODED THE TANKS AND XE.3 SHOT UNDER THE SEA... THE CREW HELD THEIR BREATHS AND WAITED ANXIOUSLY...

I CAN HEAR THEIR ENGINES OVERHEAD NOW.. LISTEN...

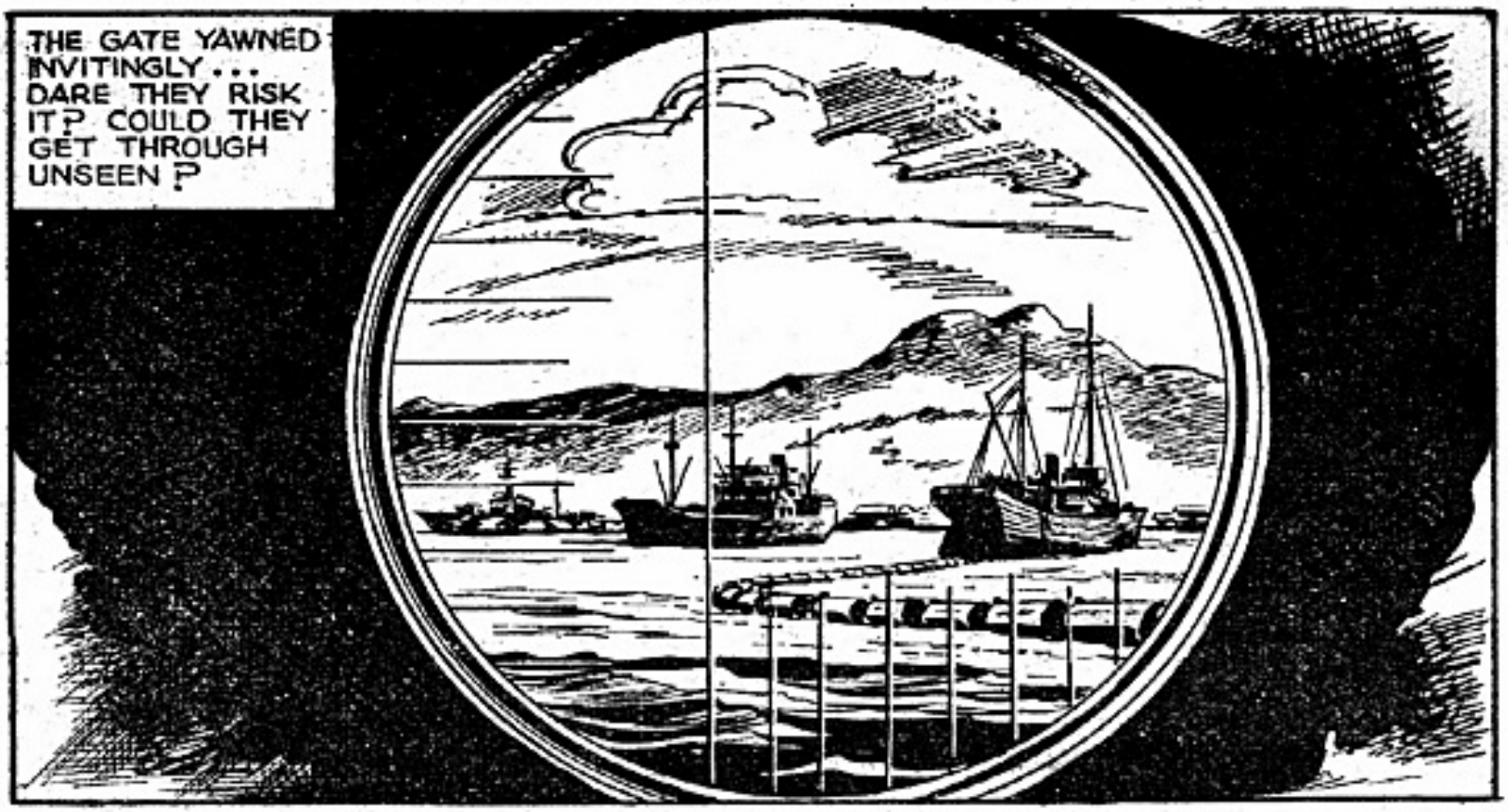
IF THAT ESCORT SHIP SPOTTED US, WE'LL BE IN TROUBLE!


BUT THE ENEMY SHIPS PASSED BY... THE SUBMARINE SURFACED AGAIN LATER AND FRASER CLIMBED OUT. THEN HIS EYES WIDENED WITH HORROR AT WHAT THEY SAW!
GOOD HEAVENS! KIWI... GET READY TO TAKE HER BACK GENTLY... WE'RE RESTING ON A BLOOMIN' MINE! WE'RE RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF A JAP MINEFIELD!

ICY CHILLS TRICKLED DOWN THEIR SPINES... THEN THE TINY SUBMARINE GENTLY DIPPED AWASH AND SLIPPED BACK... AND THE THREE MEN LOOKED SILENTLY AT FRASER...
WHEW! THAT WAS CLOSE! WE'VE JUST EDGED AWAY FROM IT... COME ON... SLOW AHEAD. THERE'S NO GOING BACK NOW!


THEY SLID THROUGH THE MINEFIELD WITH SUDDEN DEATH ON EVERY SIDE, EXPECTING EVERY MOMENT TO HEAR THE SHATTERING ROAR OF AN EXPLOSION...

BUT THEIR LUCK HELD... AT TEN-THIRTY THEY SIGHTED AN ARMED TRAWLER AHEAD...
THERE'S THE TRAWLER GUARDING THE ANTI-SUB NET-BOOM... BUT YOU WON'T HAVE TO GO OUT AND CUT THE NET, MAGENNIS... THE GATES ARE OPEN! WE'LL TRY AND GET IN WITHOUT BEING SPOTTED.
THAT'LL SAVE ME ONE JOB, ANYWAY!


THE GATE YAWNED INVITINGLY... DARE THEY RISK IT? COULD THEY GET THROUGH UNSEEN?

ALL THE MONTHS OF HARD, SLOGGING TRAINING WAS NOW TO BE PUT TO THE TEST AND EACH MAN'S HEART BEAT MORE FIERCELY AS TICH FRASER QUIETLY GAVE HIS ORDERS....
RIGHT! DOWN PERISCOPE. WE'LL HAVE TO SCRAPE THE BOTTOM, KIWI. HALF SPEED AHEAD. WE'LL TRY TO STEER RIGHT UNDER THE TRAWLER.

THE NERVES OF ALL FOUR OF THE CREW WERE KEYED TO FEVER PITCH AND THE STIFLING HEAT INSIDE THE TINY CRAFT MADE THE SWEAT POUR OFF THEM. SLOWLY, THE XE.3 BUMPED AND SLITHERED ALONG THE SANDY BOTTOM...

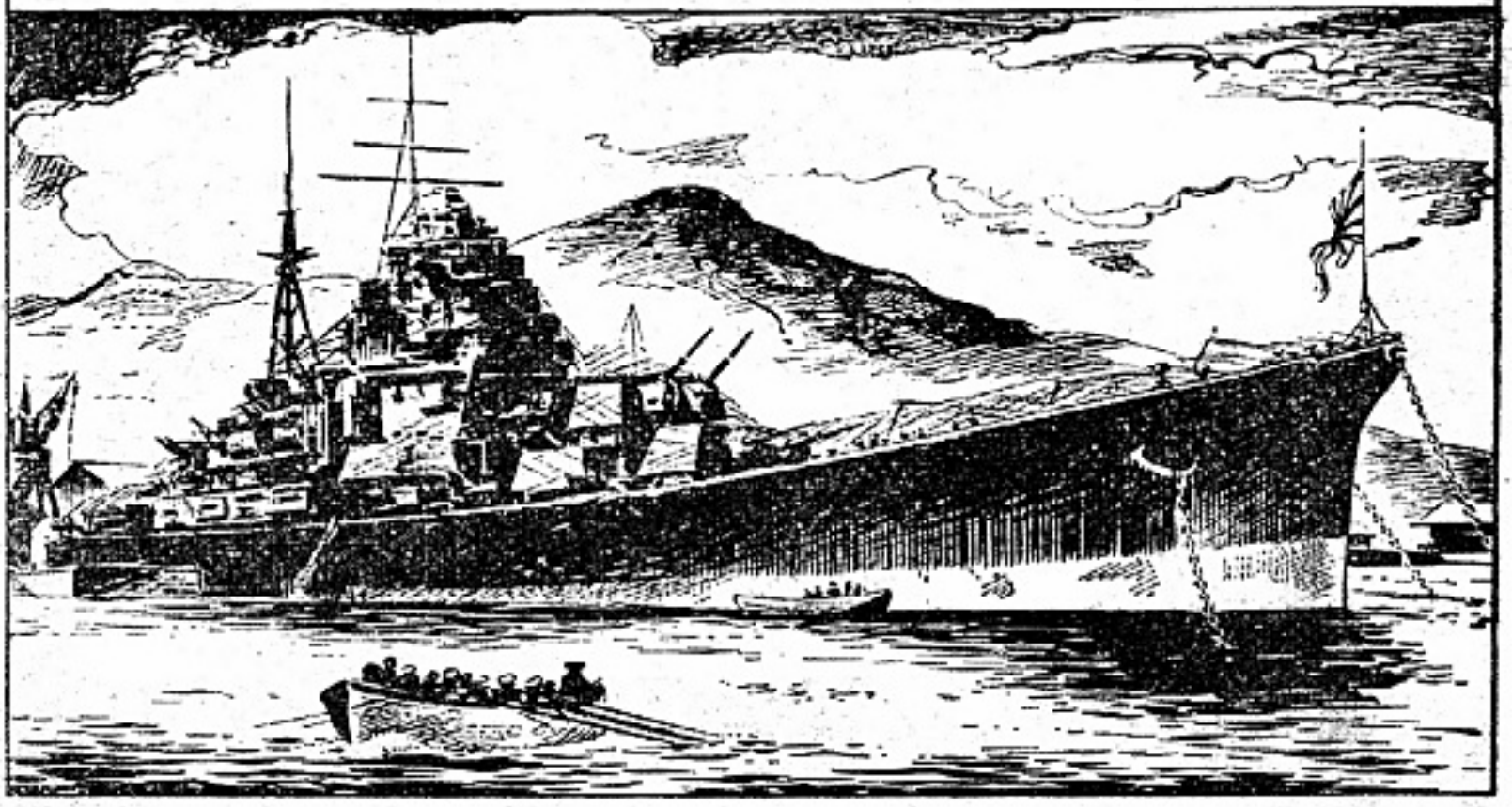
INSIDE THE SUBMARINE AGONISING TENSION MOUNTED SECOND BY SECOND....
STEERING TWO HUNDRED AND SEVENTY DEGREES, SIR. COURSE STEADY.
GOOD. HOLD HER ON THAT FOR ANOTHER FIVE MINUTES. THEN I'LL RISK A LOOK UP TOP. LET'S HOPE NONE OF THOSE JAPS IN THE TRAWLER LOOK OVER THE SIDE!

AS THE MINUTES TICKED BY, THE ONLY SOUND CAME FROM THE HUMMING OF THE ELECTRIC MOTORS. THEN, AFTER WHAT SEEMED AN ETERNITY, FRASER ORDERED THE PERISCOPE UP AGAIN...
WE'RE INSIDE. DOWN PERISCOPE.
...AND AN AUDIBLE SIGH OF RELIEF ESCAPED FROM THE CREW.

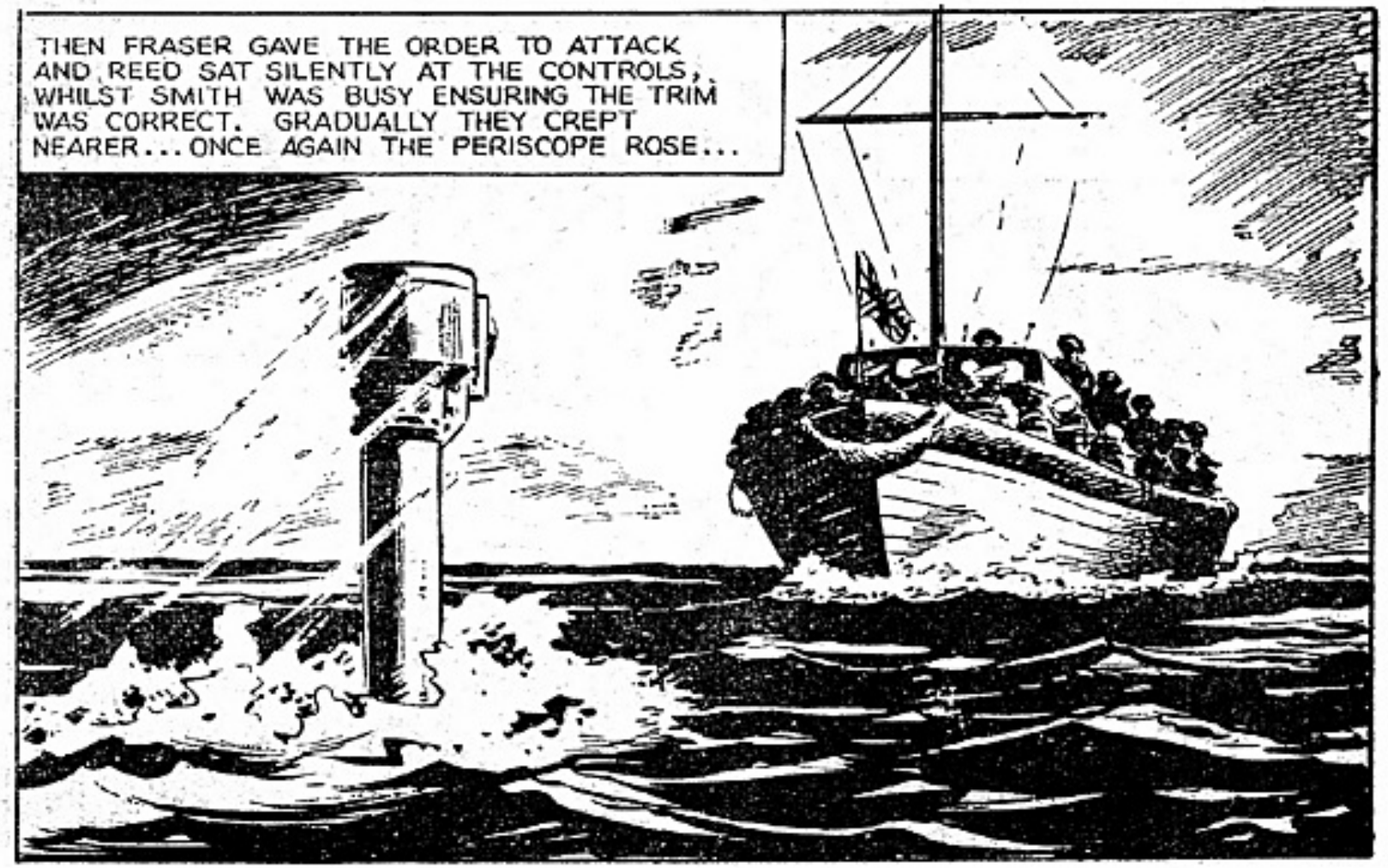
THEY SET A NEW COURSE UP THE STRAIT, WHICH WAS THRONGED WITH SHIPS OF ALL SHAPES AND SIZES. AN HOUR LATER, TICH FRASER TOLD MAGENNIS TO GET READY.
PHEW! IT'S BAD ENOUGH GETTING THIS OUTFIT ON IN THE OPEN... BUT IN THIS SARDINE TIN IT'S PLAIN MURDER!

JUST AFTER MID-DAY, THE BRASS COLUMN OF THE PERISCOPE SLID UP AND FRASER KNELT DOWN BY THE VIEW-FINDER.
I CAN SEE HER! THE TAKAO! SHE'S SMOTHERED WITH CAMOUFLAGE... BUT RIGHT IN THE PLACE WE PLOTTED. NICE WORK, CHAPS!

THE "TAKAO'S" MASSIVE SUPERSTRUCTURE MADE HER LOOK TOP HEAVY AND WITH EIGHT 8-INCH GUNS, NUMEROUS TORPEDO TUBES AND FOUR PLANES ON BOARD, SHE WAS A MENACING AND HARD-HITTING ENEMY ...

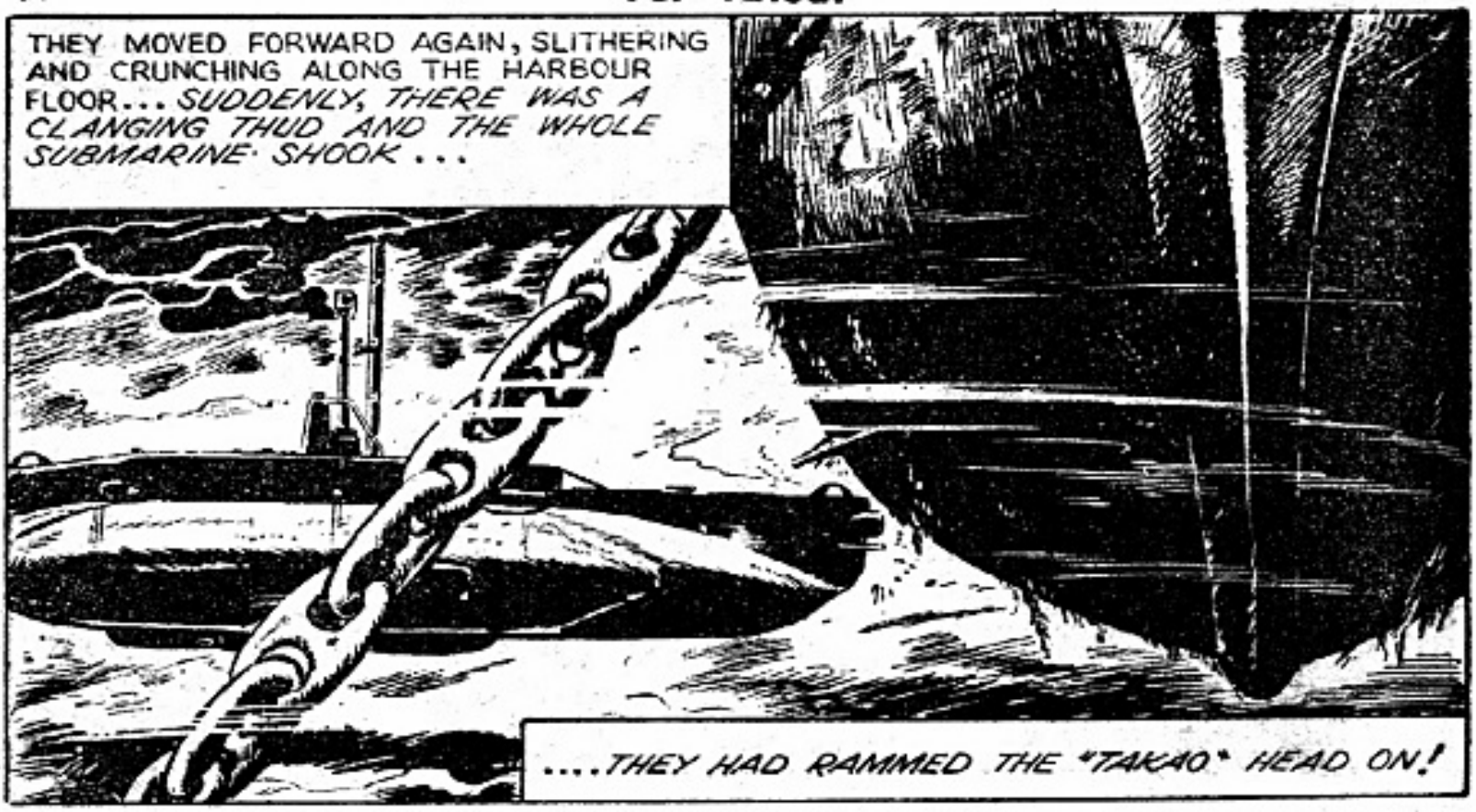


THEN FRASER GAVE THE ORDER TO ATTACK AND REED SAT SILENTLY AT THE CONTROLS, WHILST SMITH WAS BUSY ENSURING THE TRIM WAS CORRECT. GRADUALLY THEY CREPT NEARER... ONCE AGAIN THE PERISCOPE ROSE...



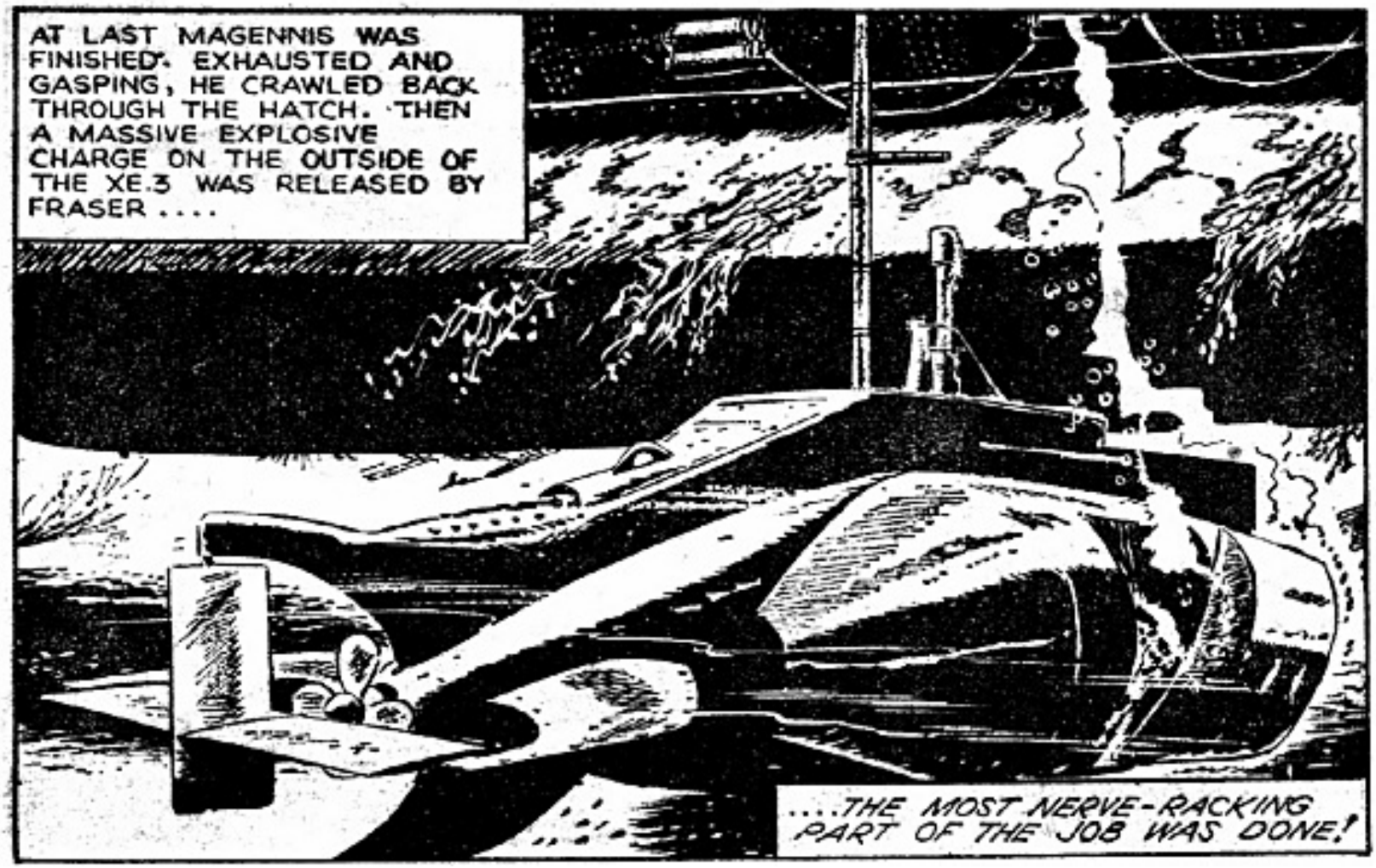
FLOOD Q! DOWN PERISCOPE! DIVE, DIVE, DIVE! THERE'S A BOATLOAD OF JAPS IN A LIBERTY VESSEL ... COMING FROM THE "TAKAO"!

THE XE-3 SHOT DOWN TO THE HARBOUR BED IN A RUSH! IT THUDDED ON THE HARBOUR FLOOR AND THE ENGINE WAS CUT.
THAT WAS A CLOSE ONE! THOSE JAPS MUST BE BLIND! OKAY... START HER UP AGAIN. AS SLOWLY AS POSSIBLE. MICK... GET READY.

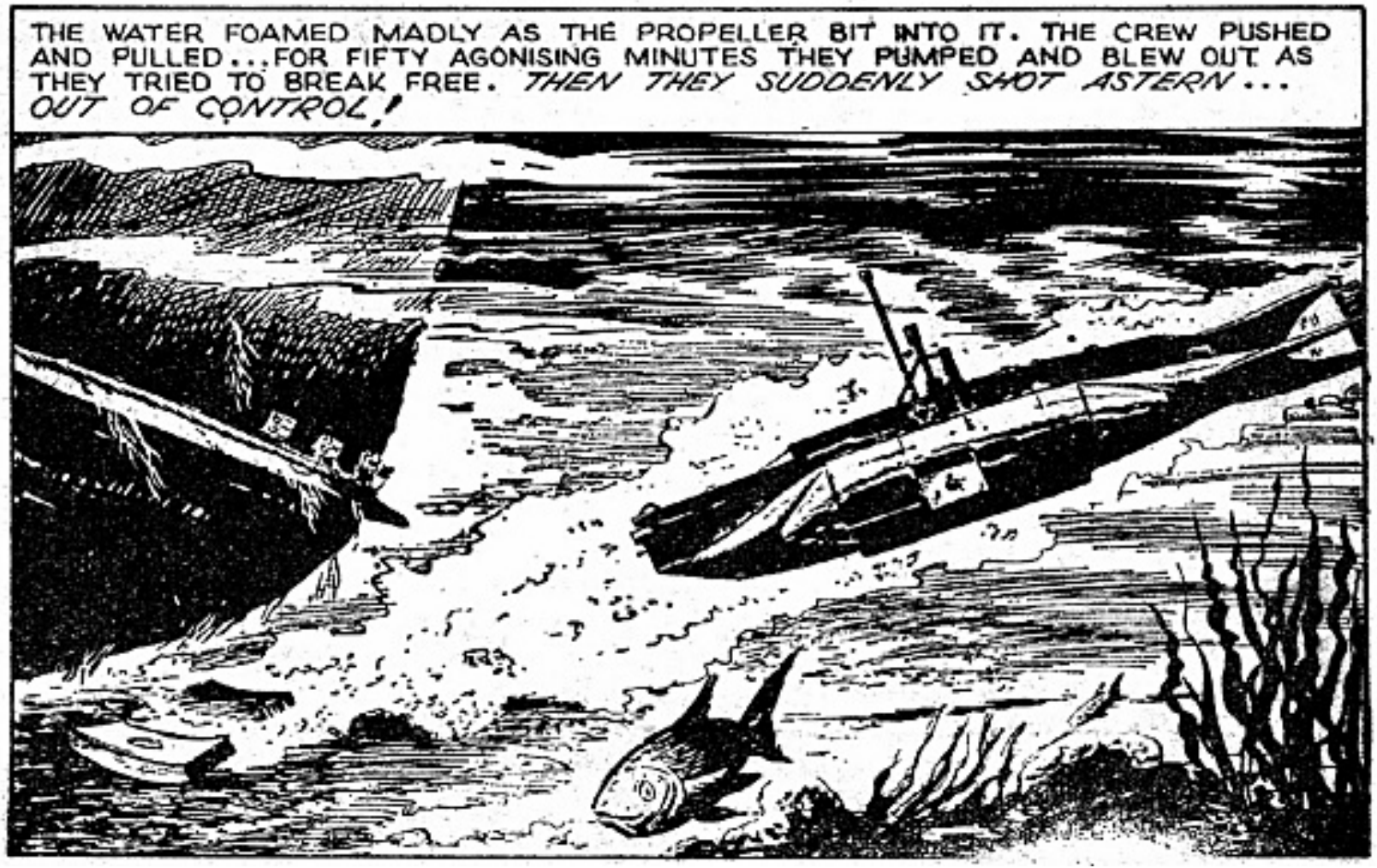

THEY MOVED FORWARD AGAIN, SLITHERING AND CRUNCHING ALONG THE HARBOUR FLOOR... SUDDENLY, THERE WAS A CLANGING THUD AND THE WHOLE SUBMARINE SHOOK...
....THEY HAD RAMMED THE "TAKAO" HEAD ON!

THEY PULLED BACK... THEN SLOWLY RAN FORWARD AGAIN... AND CAME TO REST HALF UNDER THE WEED-ENCRUSTED HULL OF THE ENEMY SHIP. AFTER WAITING CRAMMED IN THE TINY CONNING TOWER, MAGENNIS FOUND THE EXTERNAL HATCH WOULD ONLY PARTLY OPEN AND HE HAD A BACK-BREAKING TASK TO SQUEEZE THROUGH THE GAP.

THE DIVER'S OXYGEN EQUIPMENT WAS DAMAGED IN GETTING OUT, BUT HE IGNORED THE TELL-TALE BUBBLES AS HE BEGAN FIXING THE LIMPET MINES TO THE HULL OF THE "TAKAO".
...HIS HANDS WERE TORN AND BLEEDING FROM SCRAPING AWAY THE BARNACLES WHICH ENCRUSTED THE BOTTOM OF THE CRUISER...BUT HE CARRIED ON DETERMINEDLY!


AT LAST MAGENNIS WAS FINISHED. EXHAUSTED AND GASPING, HE CRAWLED BACK THROUGH THE HATCH. THEN A MASSIVE EXPLOSIVE CHARGE ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE XE.3 WAS RELEASED BY FRASER....
....THE MOST NERVE-RACKING PART OF THE JOB WAS DONE!

THE MOTOR WAS STARTED WITH MAXIMUM SPEED ... BUT THE TINY SUBMARINE DID NOT MOVE!
WE'RE JAMMED DOWN BY THE DARNED CRUISER! STOP MOTORS... FULL AHEAD! STOP... FULL ASTERN!
THE TIDE MUST HAVE GONE DOWN QUICKLY... WE'RE IN A PROPER MESS NOW!


THE WATER FOAMED MADLY AS THE PROPELLER BIT INTO IT. THE CREW PUSHED AND PULLED... FOR FIFTY AGONISING MINUTES THEY PUMPED AND BLEW OUT AS THEY TRIED TO BREAK FREE. THEN THEY SUDDENLY SHOT ASTERN... OUT OF CONTROL!

...THE SUBMARINE WAS SHOT ALMOST TO THE SURFACE!
DOWN! DOWN! FLOOD Q! CUT THE MOTORS!
AYE, AYE, SIR. CUTTING...

THE HYDROPLANES TOOK CONTROL AND THE XE.3 SANK BACK TO THE BOTTOM AS SHE REGAINED TRIM.
WE MUST HAVE SENT A WHACKING GREAT WATERSPOUT TO THE SURFACE! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE--QUICK!
CAN'T HEAR A THING UP ABOVE... BUT THEY'LL BE SLINGING DEPTH CHARGES OVER AT US IN A MINUTE...

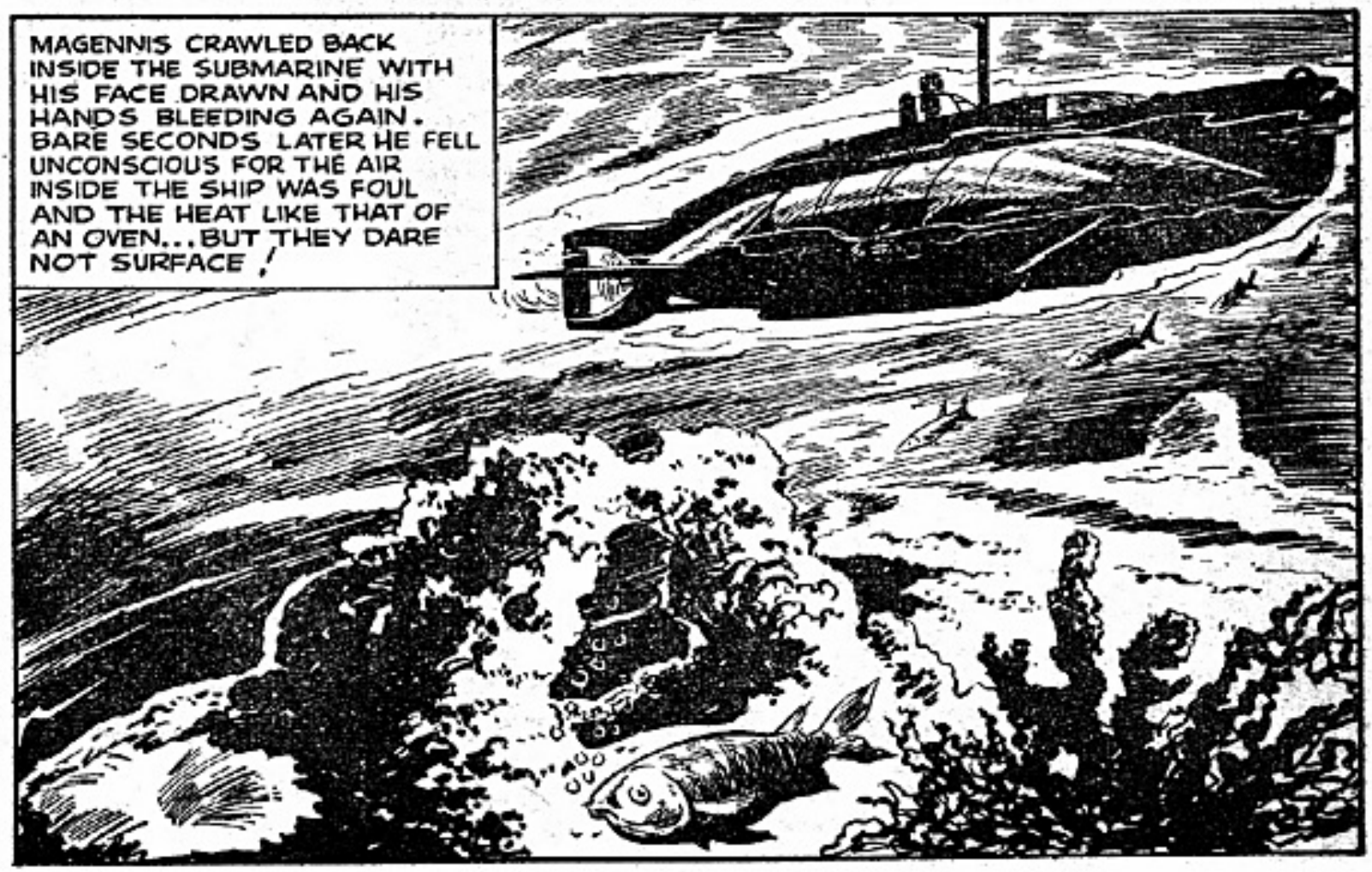
ONCE AGAIN THE MOTORS WERE STARTED ... BUT THIS TIME THE HEAD OF THE SUBMARINE SWUNG ROUND ...
I CAN'T HOLD THE TRIM, SIR. SHE'S PULLING ROUND ... SWINGING TO STARBOARD.
I KNOW WHAT'S CAUSING IT ... IT'S THE LIMPET CONTAINER. I'VE TRIED TO DUMP IT, BUT IT MUST HAVE JAMMED.

IAN FRASER KNEW SOMEBODY WOULD HAVE TO GO OUT AND FREE THE CONTAINER AND HE MOVED FORWARD TO WHERE THE BURLY IRISH DIVER WAS SITTING, HIS INJURED HANDS BEFORE HIM.
GIVE ME YOUR SUIT, MAGENNIS. I'M GOING OUT.
NO, SIR ... LET ME. I'M ALL RIGHT. I'LL GO!

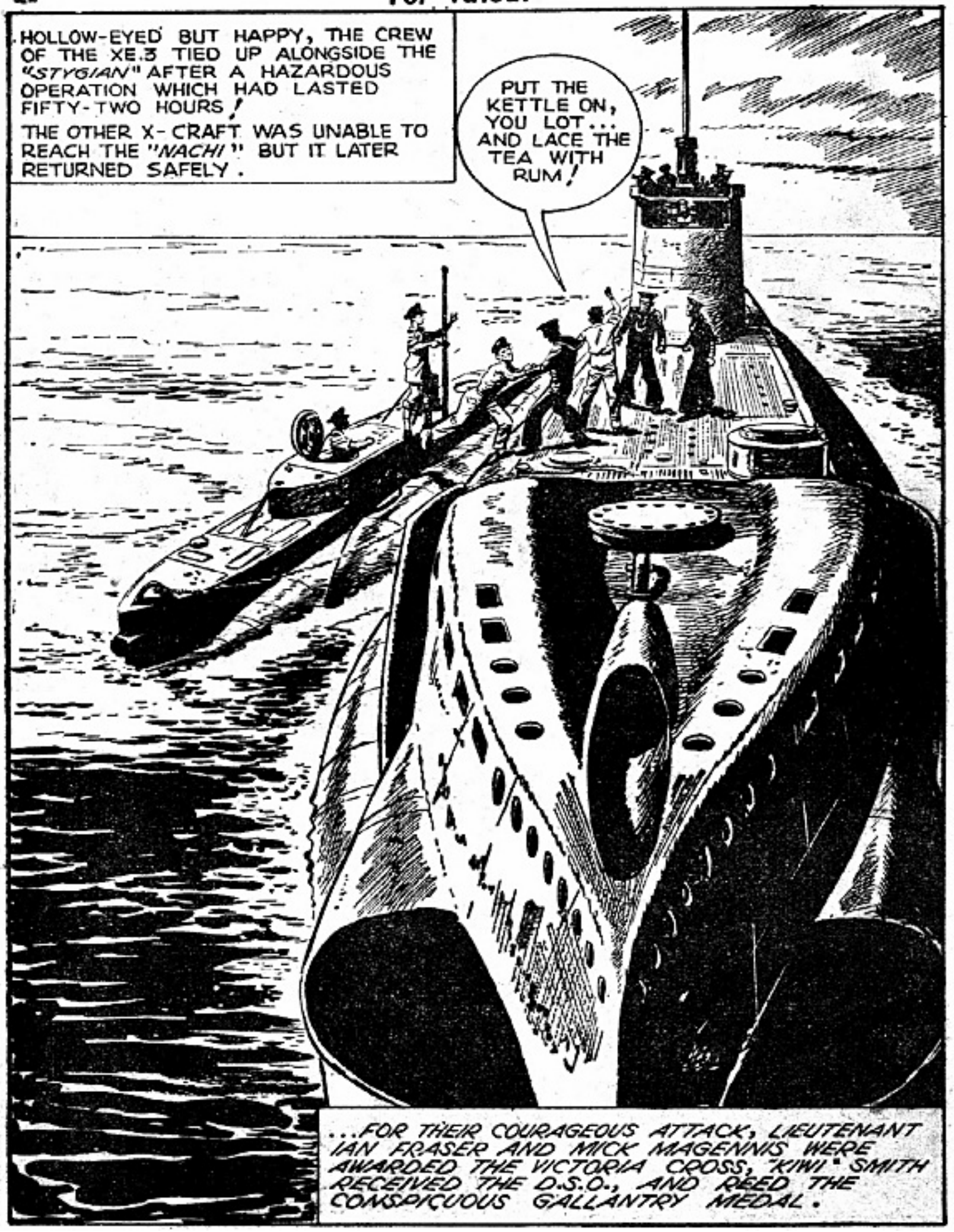
DESPITE HIS LACERATED HANDS AND THE DAMAGED OXYGEN APPARATUS, THE DIVER INSISTED ON GOING OUT AGAIN. IT WAS THE ACT OF A SUPREMELY BRAVE MAN!

WHAT THE HECK'S HE DOING? IF THE JAPS HAVEN'T SPOTTED US ALREADY, THEY'LL HEAR THAT RACKET RIGHT ACROSS SINGAPORE!

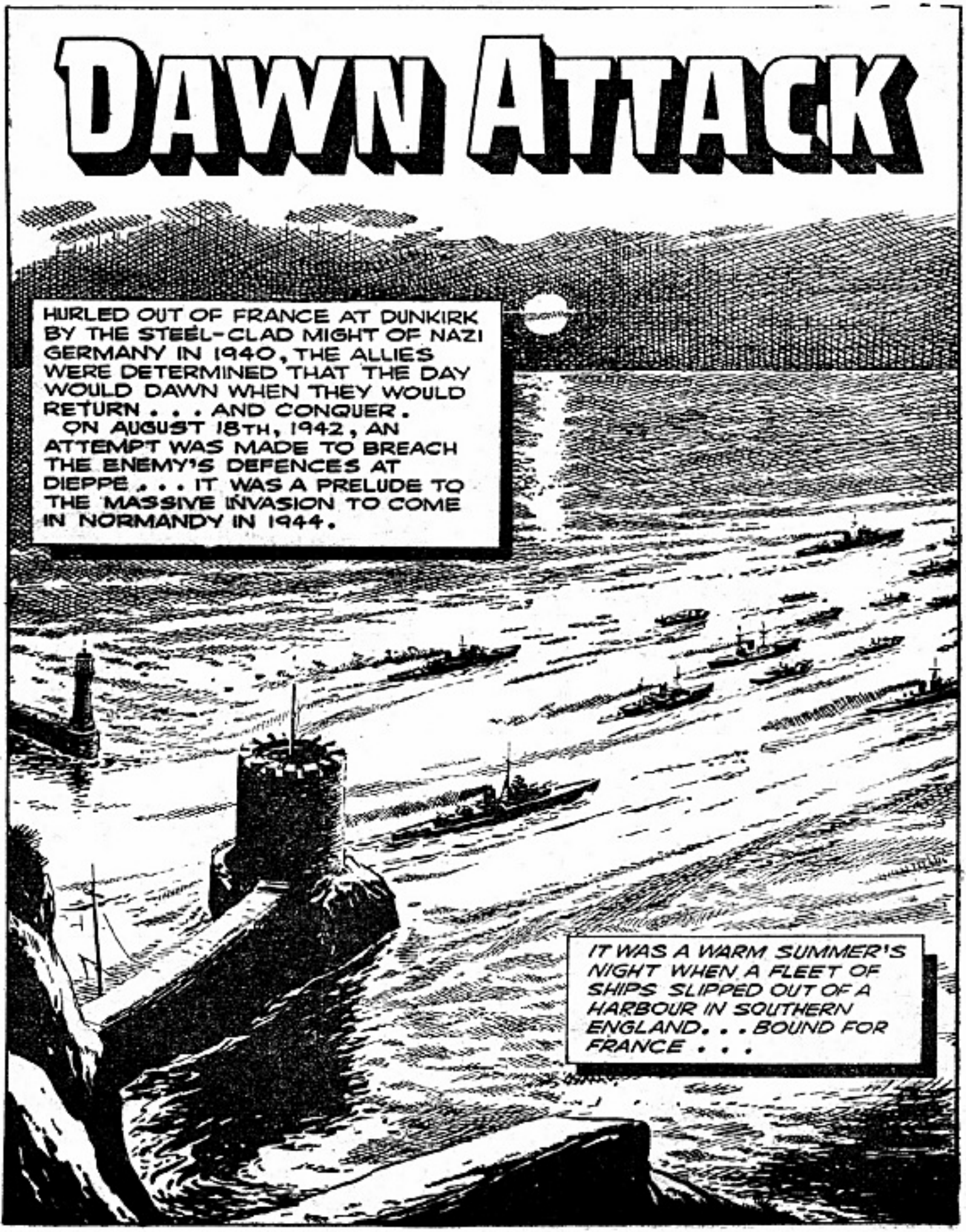
THEN THE CARGO CONTAINER FELL AWAY...AND THE FROGMAN SWAM BACK TO THE HATCH.. HIS TASK ACCOMPLISHED!


MAGENNIS CRAWLED BACK INSIDE THE SUBMARINE WITH HIS FACE DRAWN AND HIS HANDS BLEEDING AGAIN. BARE SECONDS LATER HE FELL UNCONSCIOUS FOR THE AIR INSIDE THE SHIP WAS FOUL AND THE HEAT LIKE THAT OF AN OVEN...BUT THEY DARE NOT SURFACE!

AT NINE-THIRTY THAT NIGHT THE CHARGES BLEW UP... RIPPING A SIXTY-FOOT HOLE IN THE "TAKAO'S" HULL AND PUTTING THE GUN TURRETS OUT OF ACTION ....
.... THE JAPANESE CRUISER SETTLED ON THE BOTTOM OF THE HARBOUR AND REMAINED THERE UNTIL THE END OF THE WAR ....


HOLLOW-EYED BUT HAPPY, THE CREW OF THE XE.3 TIED UP ALONGSIDE THE "STYGIAN" AFTER A HAZARDOUS OPERATION WHICH HAD LASTED FIFTY-TWO HOURS!
THE OTHER X-CRAFT WAS UNABLE TO REACH THE "NACHI" BUT IT LATER RETURNED SAFELY.
PUT THE KETTLE ON, YOU LOT... AND LACE THE TEA WITH RUM!
...FOR THEIR COURAGEOUS ATTACK, LIEUTENANT IAN FRASER AND MICK MAGENNIS WERE AWARDED THE VICTORIA CROSS, "KIWI" SMITH RECEIVED THE D.S.O., AND REED THE CONSPICUOUS GALLANTRY MEDAL.

DAWN ATTACK


HURLED OUT OF FRANCE AT DUNKIRK BY THE STEEL-CLAD MIGHT OF NAZI GERMANY IN 1940, THE ALLIES WERE DETERMINED THAT THE DAY WOULD DAWN WHEN THEY WOULD RETURN . . . AND CONQUER.
ON AUGUST 18TH, 1942, AN ATTEMPT WAS MADE TO BREACH THE ENEMY'S DEFENCES AT DIEPPE . . . IT WAS A PRELUDE TO THE MASSIVE INVASION TO COME IN NORMANDY IN 1944.
IT WAS A WARM SUMMER'S NIGHT WHEN A FLEET OF SHIPS SLIPPED OUT OF A HARBOUR IN SOUTHERN ENGLAND. . . BOUND FOR FRANCE . . .

THE MAIN FORCE CONSISTED OF THE 2ND. CANADIAN DIVISION. BUT Nos. 3 AND 4 COMMANDOS WERE GIVEN THE TASK OF DESTROYING THE TWO GERMAN GUN BATTERIES SITED ON EACH SIDE OF DIEPPE. No. 4 COMMANDO WAS COMMANDED BY LT. COLONEL LORD LOVAT, M.C.

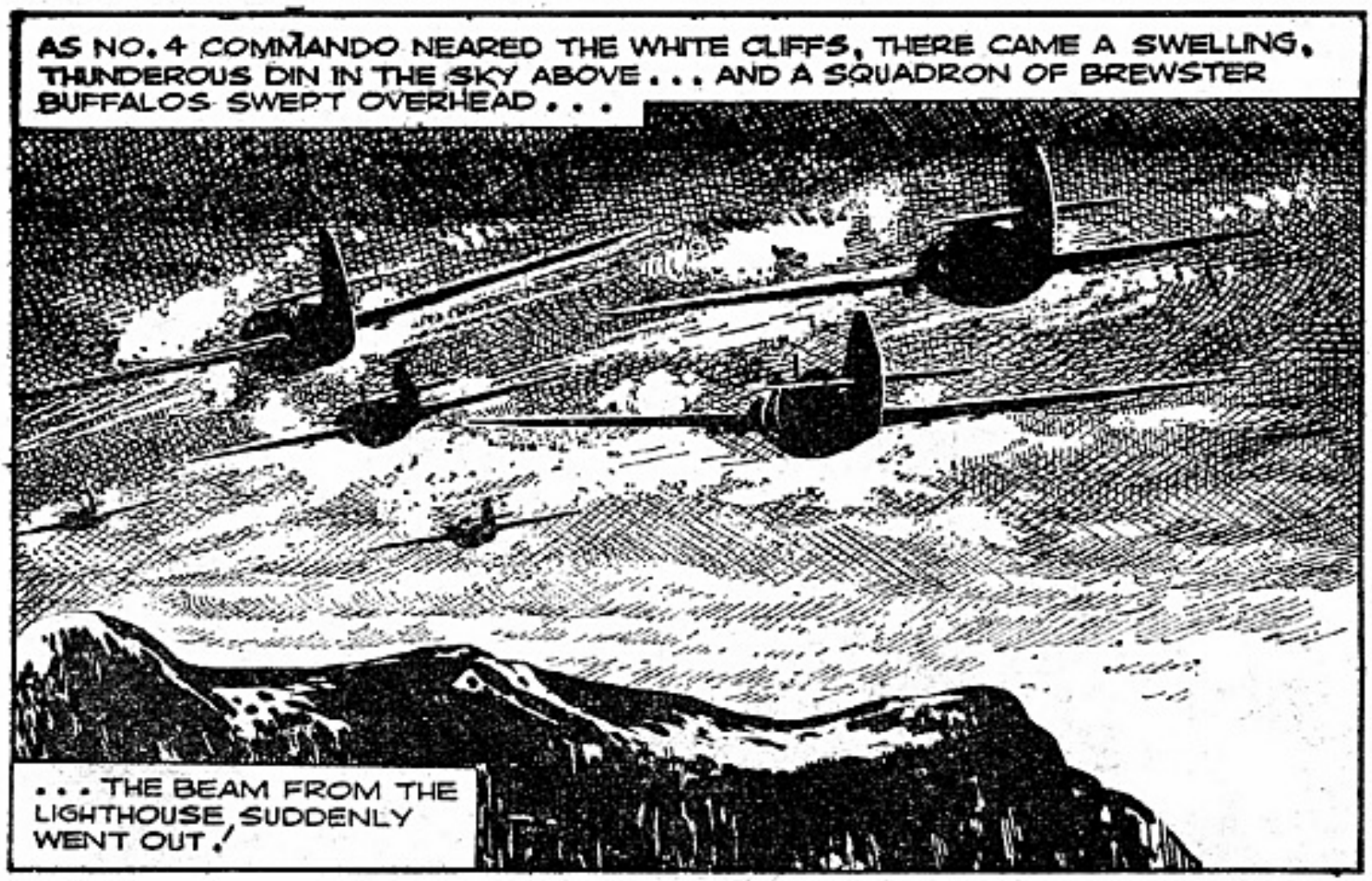
NICE NIGHT FOR A TRIP ON THE BRINY, SARGE. THINK OUR JOB'S GOING TO BE TOUGH?

IT WON'T BE A PICNIC. OUR GROUP HAS GOT TO TACKLE THE CLIFFS UNDER THE GUNS AT VASTERIVAL, WHILE COLONEL LOVAT TAKES THE OTHER BOYS UP RIVER AND GETS IN BEHIND THE JERRIES!

THE SIX 5.9 IN. GUNS OF THE GERMAN HESS BATTERY WERE WELL SITED 1200 YARDS INLAND. IT WAS IMPERATIVE THAT THE COMMANDOS DESTROYED THEM BEFORE THE GUNS COULD GO INTO ACTION AGAINST THE MAIN CANADIAN LANDING FORCE.

... THE GERMAN GUNNERS WERE IN A CONSTANT STATE OF READINESS.

TEN MILES FROM THE SHORE THE LADEN LANDING CRAFT WERE LOWERED FROM THE SHIPS AND THEY BEGAN TO CREEP ACROSS THE SEA TOWARDS THE ENEMY-HELD COAST . . .
PUT THAT LIGHT OUT! DON'T THEY KNOW THERE'S A BLOOMIN' WAR ON!
DON'T WORRY, KEN . . . THE RAFF WILL BE OVER SOON . . . THEY'LL DO IT FOR US!


AS NO. 4 COMMANDO NEARED THE WHITE CLIFFS, THERE CAME A SWELLING, THUNDEROUS DIN IN THE SKY ABOVE . . . AND A SQUADRON OF BREWSTER BUFFALOS SWEPT OVERHEAD . . .
. . . THE BEAM FROM THE LIGHTHOUSE SUDDENLY WENT OUT!

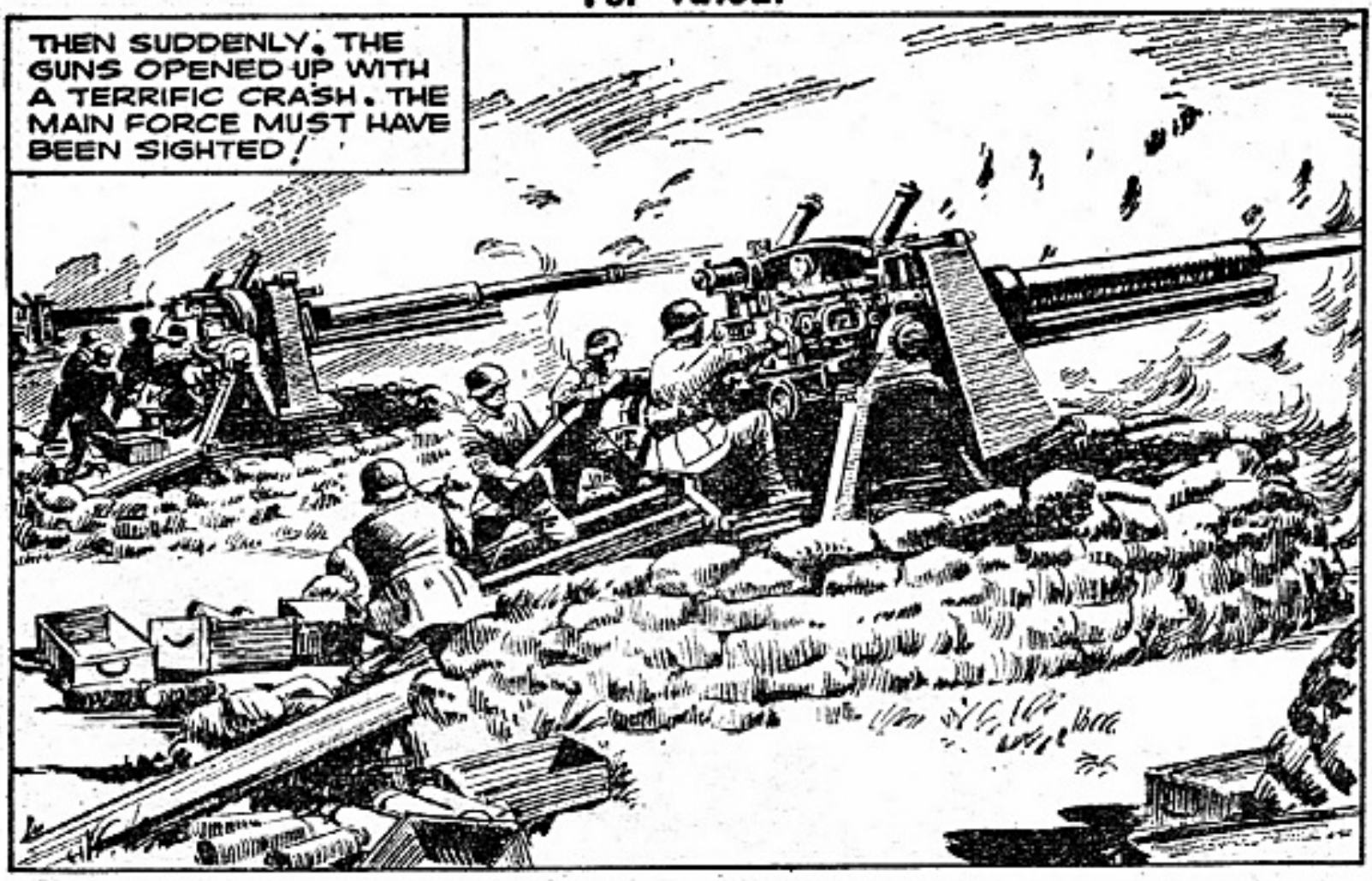
AT 4.50 A.M., THE LANDING CRAFT CARRYING THE COMMANDO GROUP LED BY MAJOR MILLS ROBERTS GROUNDED ON THE SHINGLE BENEATH THE WHITE CLIFFS... AND THE MEN LEAPED OUT AND RUSHED UP THE BEACH.

'C' TROOP RACED TOWARDS A NARROW GULLY FESTOONED WITH BARBED WIRE... A BANGALORE TORPEDO WAS SWIFTLY PLACED IN POSITION AND THE FUSE LIT...

THERE WAS A CONTINUOUS ROAR OF FLAK FROM THE GERMAN GUNS ON THE CLIFF ABOVE AS THEY FIRED AT THE R.A.F. PLANES... AND THE NOISE DROWNED THE SHATTERING EXPLOSION OF THE BANGALORE TORPEDO...
COR! ENOUGH TO WAKE THE DEAD!

CANNON-FIRING HURRICANES WERE PLASTERING THE GUN POSITIONS ON BOTH CLIFFS AS THE MEN FROM No. 4 COMMANDO RACED UP TO THE CLIFF TOP.

SWIFTLY THE COMMANDOS RAN FORWARD TO THE COVER OF A THICK WOOD . . . SO FAR THEIR LANDING WAS UNSEEN.
THE JERRIES MUST BE BLIND IF THEY DIDN'T SEE US!
I RECKON THE RAFF KEPT THEIR NUTS DOWN FOR 'EM . . . BUT THE BALLOON'S SURE TO GO UP IN A MINUTE, DON'T YOU FRET!


THEN SUDDENLY, THE GUNS OPENED UP WITH A TERRIFIC CRASH. THE MAIN FORCE MUST HAVE BEEN SIGHTED!

THE GUNS FIRED SEVERAL SALVOES . . . BUT BY NOW 'C' TROOP HAD WORMED THEIR WAY INTO POSITION A HUNDRED YARDS FROM THE PERIMETER WIRE, NEAR AN OLD BARN . . . AND FROM THERE THEY OPENED FIRE . . .
GOT 'EM . . . RIGHT ON THE NOSE!

THERE WAS A GERMAN FLAK TOWER AT ONE END OF THE GUN POSITION WHICH IMMEDIATELY OPENED FIRE IN THE DIRECTION OF THE COMMANDOS . . . BUT AN ANTI-TANK RIFLE SOON BLASTED IT OUT OF ACTION !
THAT'S SETTLED THEM !

THE ENEMY RETALIATED SAVAGELY AND BEGAN TO RANGE THEIR MORTARS ON THE COMMANDO POSITIONS . . .

THEN THE COMMANDO. 2 IN. MORTAR TEAM MOVED NEARER AND OPENED UP AGAIN . . .
FIRE!

THERE WAS A STUPENDOUS, BLINDING CRASH . . . FOLLOWED BY SCREAMS AND YELLS FROM THE GERMAN POSITION. A MORTAR BOMB HAD HIT THE CORDITE CHARGES BESIDE THE NEAREST GUN!
THAT ONE BOMB SILENCED THE HESS GUN BATTERY FOR EVER!

THE COMMANDOS CONTINUED TO POUR A WITHERING FIRE INTO THE BLAZING INFERNO OF FLAME AND SMOKE, INFLICTING TREMENDOUS CASUALTIES ON THE ENEMY GUNNERS.

MEANWHILE, LORD LOVAT AND THE REST OF No. 4 COMMANDO HAD LANDED ON THE BEACH AT ONE SIDE OF THE RIVER SAANE AND WERE SMASHING THROUGH THE WIRE TO THE CLIFFS.
COME ON, YOU CHAPS... UP THE CLIFFS AS QUICK AS YOU CAN! WE'RE RIGHT ON SCHEDULE— BUT THERE'S NO TIME TO LOSE!

THE COMMANDOS POURED OVER THE CLIFF AND FLUNG THEMSELVES ON THE ENEMY PILL-BOXES IN THE TEETH OF RAKING, FIRE . . .

I ENGLISH SPEAK! DON'T SHOOT!

AND I ENGLISH SPEAK TOO. GET OUT OF THERE, YOU SAUSAGE EATER. KEEP YOUR HANDS IN THE AIR.

THE COMMANDOS SWEPT ON, RACING FOR A WOOD BEHIND THE ENEMY GUN POSITION. THOUGH THE GUNS WERE NOW SILENT, THE SURVIVING GERMAN GUNNERS WERE FIGHTING BACK DESPERATELY . . .

SPLIT INTO TWO AND BREACH THE ENEMY WIRE . . . PAT, YOU'LL ACT AS LIAISON OFFICER BETWEEN THE TWO SECTIONS.

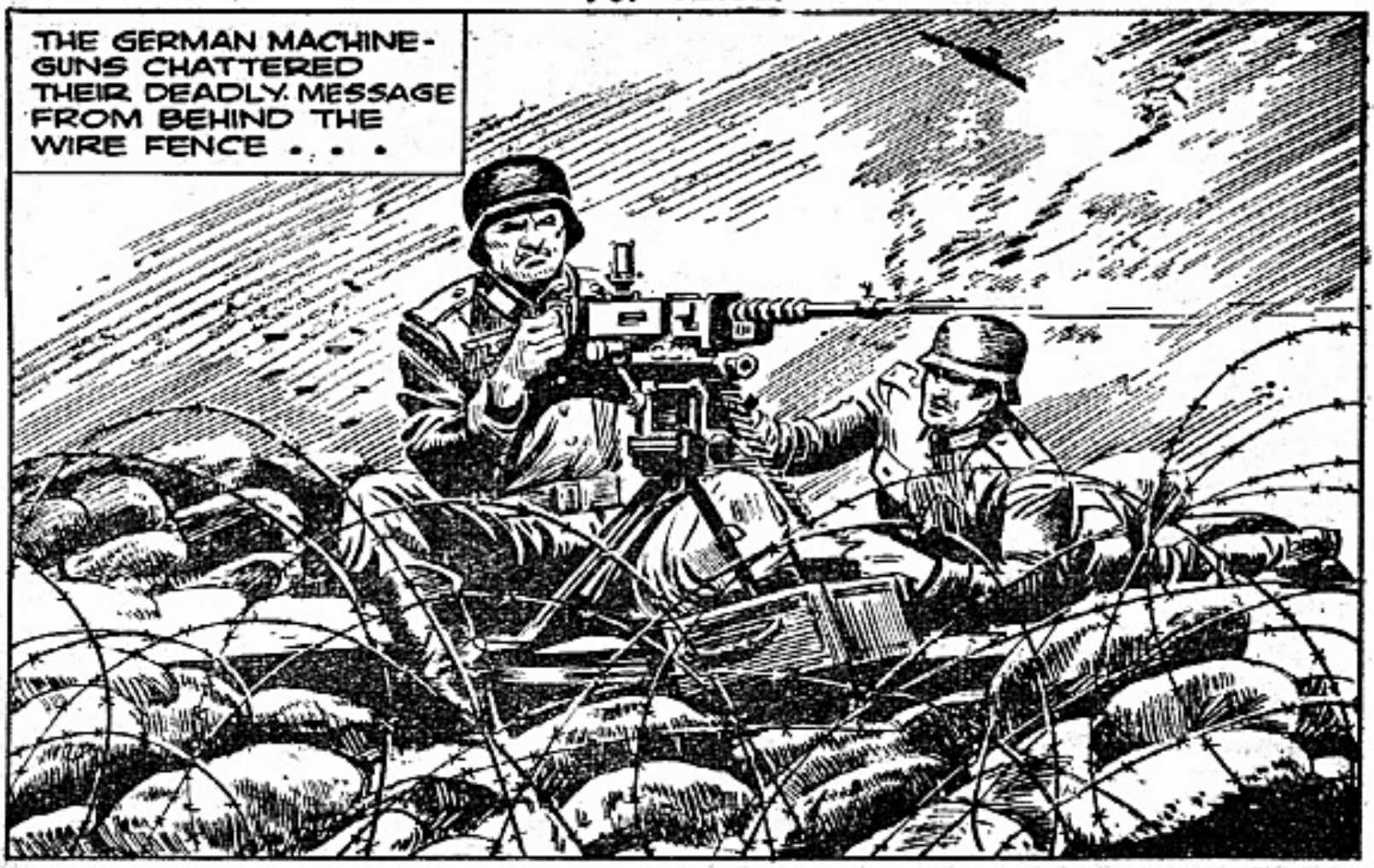
RIGHT, SIR!

CAPTAIN PAT PORTEOUS, R.A., HAD ALREADY BEEN WOUNDED IN THE INITIAL ASSAULT.

AT 6.25 A.M., MAJOR MILLS ROBERTS' TROOP SMOTHERED THE GERMAN POSITION WITH SMOKE BOMBS TO HIDE THE ASSAULT WHICH WAS TO BE MADE BY THE MAIN FORCE FROM THE REAR.
AND THREE MINUTES LATER, HOTLY PURSUED BY GERMAN FIGHTERS, MORE CANNON FIRING R.A.F. PLANES DIVED ON THE HESS BATTERY LIKE A HORDE OF ANGRY HORNETS.

THEN A VEREY LIGHT SIGNAL FLARED INTO THE SKY FROM THE WOOD BEHIND THE BATTERY... THE SIGNAL FOR LORD LOVAT'S GROUP TO ATTACK!
LET'S GO! LET 'EM HAVE IT!

BUT THE GERMANS SAW THEM COMING AND OPENED A MURDEROUS BARRAGE OF FIRE... TWO OFFICERS FELL, MORTALLY WOUNDED.


THE GERMAN MACHINE-GUNS CHATTERED THEIR DEADLY MESSAGE FROM BEHIND THE WIRE FENCE . . .

BUT EVEN THROUGH THAT HAIL OF DEATH, THE COMMANDOS MANAGED TO SET THEIR BANGALORE TORPEDOES AND BLAST THEIR WAY THROUGH THE WIRE . . .

A STICK BOMB WHISTLED THROUGH THE AIR AND EXPLODED WITH A LOUD CRASH AND THE SERGEANT-MAJOR FELL, SERIOUSLY WOUNDED . . .

CAPTAIN PORTEOUS, SEEING THAT BOTH OFFICERS HAD BEEN KILLED AND THE SERGEANT-MAJOR WOUNDED, RUSHED OUT AND RALLIED THE MEN . . .

THE SERGEANT-MAJOR, IGNORING THE PAIN OF HIS WOUND, SAT UP AND CALMLY BEGAN PICKING OFF ANY GERMAN WHO RAISED HIS HEAD . . .

ALMOST AT ONCE, CAPTAIN PORTEOUS WAS SHOT AGAIN, THIS TIME IN THE ARM. . . BUT HE NEVER FLINCHED AS HE RUSHED INTO THE GUN POSITIONS WITH THE REST OF THE MEN CLOSE ON HIS HEELS.

LIKE A MAN POSSESSED, PAT PORTEOUS CONTINUED TO LEAD THE CHARGE THROUGH THE ENEMY POSITIONS, AND THE RIFLES AND BAYONETS OF THE COMMANDOS REAPED A GRIM HARVEST AMONG THE GERMAN GUNNERS.

THEN ONCE AGAIN, THE GALLANT CAPTAIN WAS WOUNDED. HE FELL ON HIS KNEES, BUT STRUGGLED UP AGAIN, DETERMINED TO CARRY THE ASSAULT THROUGH TO THE END. . .
YOU ALL RIGHT, SIR ?
YES, YES! WE'RE NOT FINISHED YET.

ONLY FOUR GERMANS LIVED TO TELL THE TALE OF THAT HEROIC CHARGE, THE REST DIED AT THEIR GUNS BEFORE THE STIRRING ONSLAUGHT OF THE COMMANDOS. DEMOLITION CHARGES WERE EXPERTLY PLACED IN EACH GUN . . .
LAST ONE, SIR. THEN WE CAN HOP IT BACK TO THE BEACH!

THE COMMANDOS WITHDREW, TAKING THEIR WOUNDED WITH THEM... AS THEY PULLED BACK TO THE CLIFFS, THE CHARGES IN THE GUNS EXPLODED, WRECKING THEM FOR ALL TIME.

WELL, OUR JOB'S ALL BUTTONED UP NOW. I HOPE THE CANADIANS GET ASHORE AND INTO THE TOWN. SOUNDS AS IF THEY'RE HAVING A RIPE OLD TIME DOWN THERE!

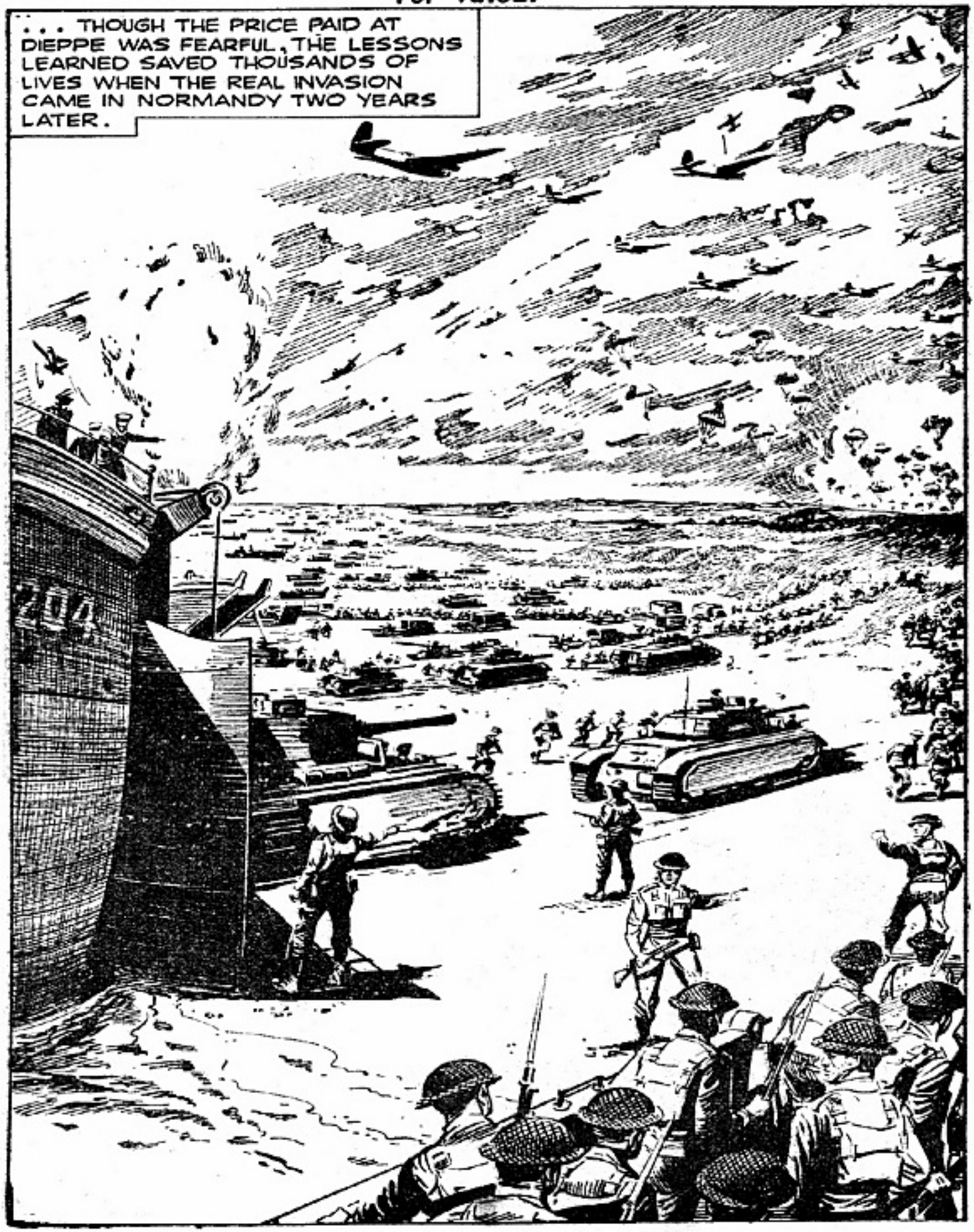
GERMANS OUTSIDE THE GUN POSITIONS STILL SNIPED AT THE WITHDRAWING COMMANDOS, BUT THE TOUGH SOLDIERS RETIRED IN GOOD ORDER DOWN TO THE BEACH...

WE DON'T WANT TO GO ROUND THE BLOOMIN' BAY, MATE. WE WANT TO GO HOME... THERE'S A GOOD HOT DINNER WAITING FOR US... I HOPE!

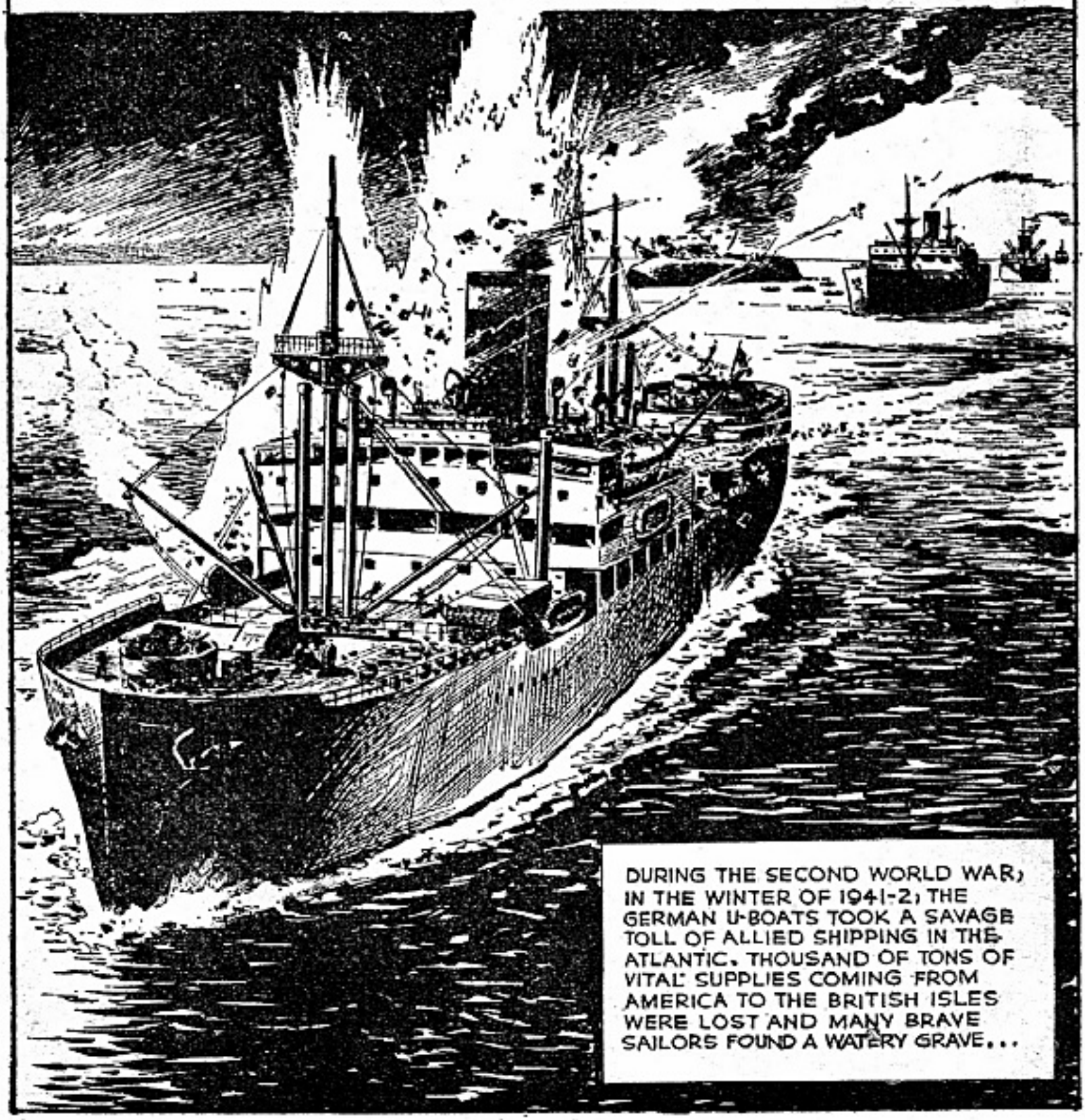
TRIP ROUND THE BAY—TANNER A TIME! ALL ABOARD!

THE LANDING CRAFT FILLED UP AND PULLED AWAY. BEHIND THEM SMOKE STILL ROSE HIGH IN THE AIR AND FROM THE DIRECTION OF DIEPPE THERE CAME THE SULLEN ROAR OF GUNFIRE . . .
SOUNDS AS IF THE BOYS IN THE TOWN ARE HAVING A ROUGH TIME!
THOSE CANADIAN BLOKES ARE PLENTY TOUGH . . . THEY'LL GIVE THE JERRIES WHAT FOR!

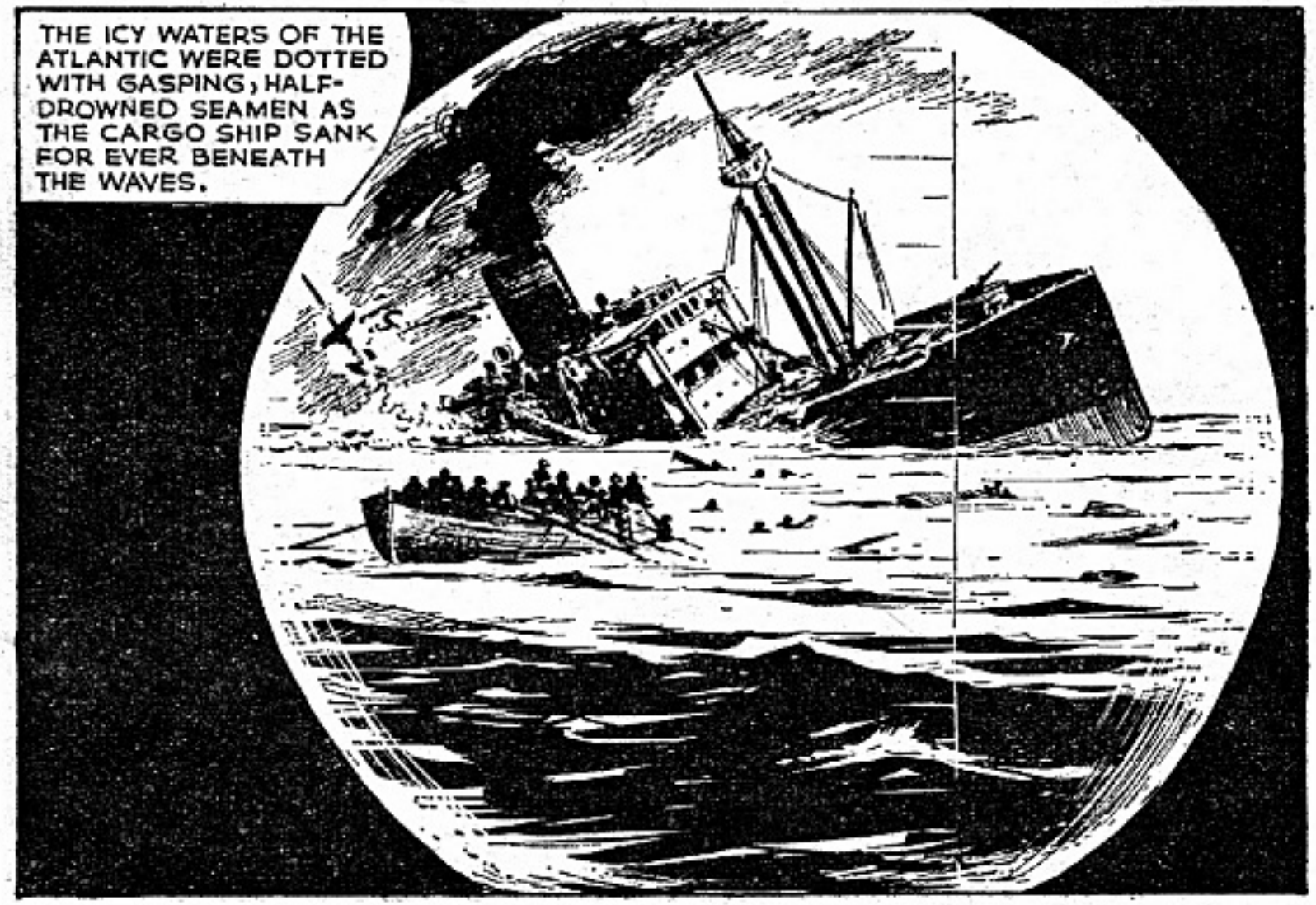
BUT THE MAIN ATTACK ON DIEPPE WAS MET BY FEROCIOUS OPPOSITION FROM OVERWHELMING GERMAN FORCES. OUT OF 5,000 MEN SENT IN, 3,350 BECAME CASUALTIES . . .
MANY GALLANT DEEDS WERE DONE ON THAT SUMMER'S DAY IN AUGUST 1942. BUT ONE OF THE BRAVEST WAS THE ACTION OF CAPTAIN PORTEOUS, R.A. IN LEADING THE CHARGE ON THE GUNS OF THE HESS BATTERY. FOR HIS COURAGE AND DETERMINATION, HE WAS LATER AWARDED THE VICTORIA CROSS.


. . . THOUGH THE PRICE PAID AT DIEPPE WAS FEARFUL, THE LESSONS LEARNED SAVED THOUSANDS OF LIVES WHEN THE REAL INVASION CAME IN NORMANDY TWO YEARS LATER.

Blazing Courage



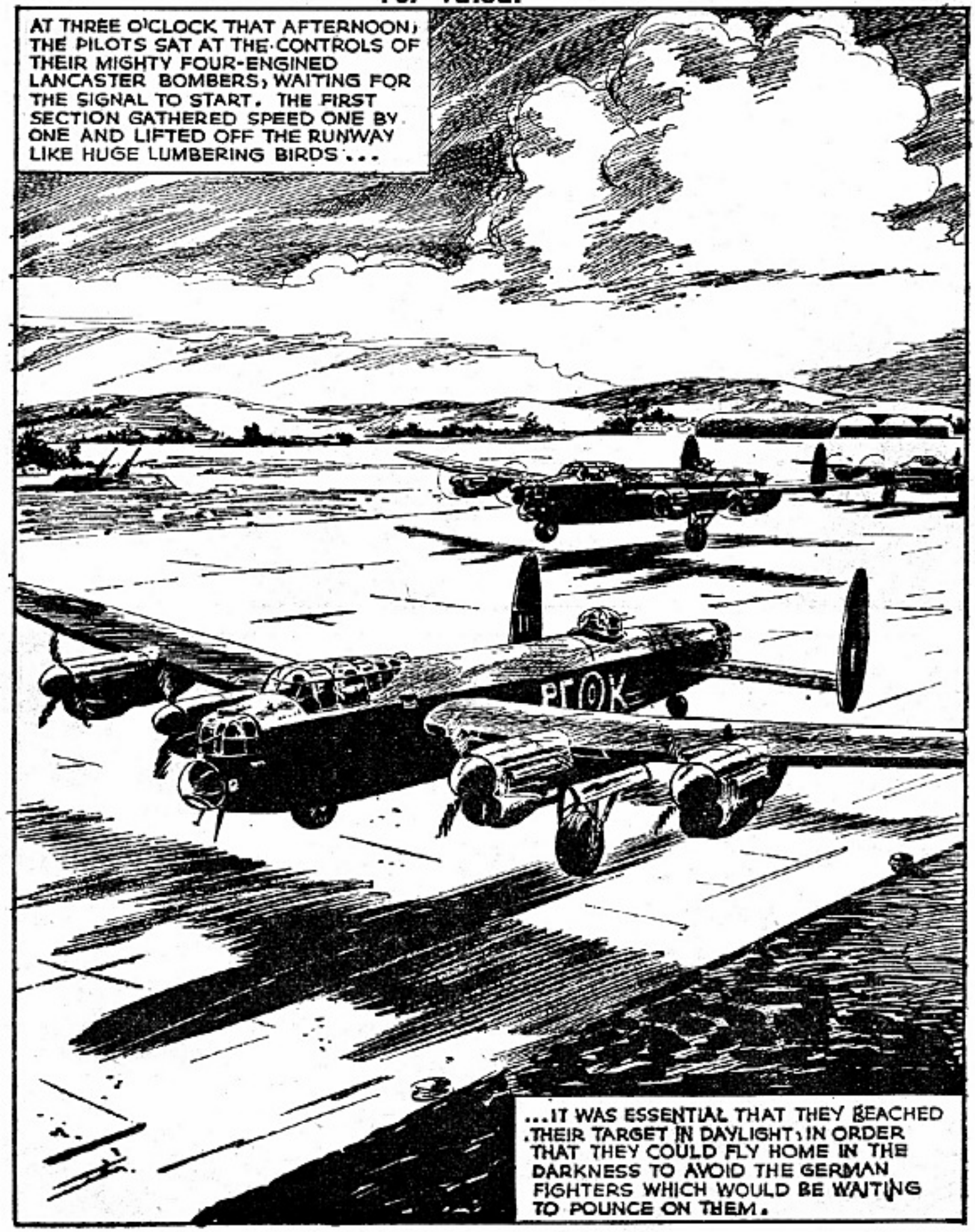
A MIRTHLESS SMILE CROSSED THE FACE OF THE U-BOAT COMMANDER AS HE LOOKED THROUGH HIS PERISCOPE AT HIS LATEST VICTIM . . .
ACH! THE THIRD SHIP TODAY! WE ARE REAPING A RICH HARVEST.
THIS SHOULD GET YOU THE IRON CROSS, KAPITAN!


THE ICY WATERS OF THE ATLANTIC WERE DOTTED WITH GASPING, HALF-DROWNED SEAMEN AS THE CARGO SHIP SANK FOR EVER BENEATH THE WAVES.

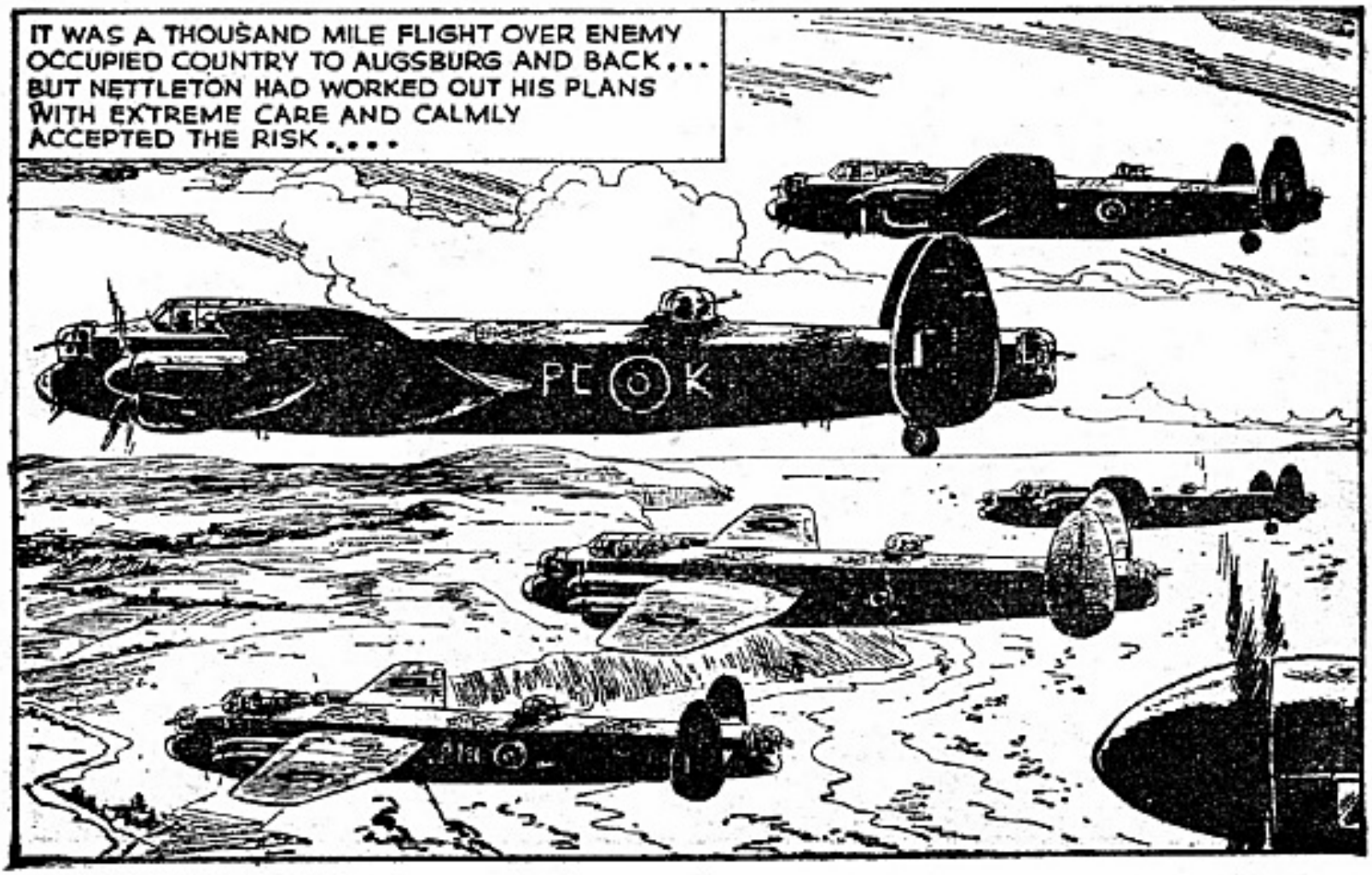
SEVERAL MONTHS LATER, SQUADRON LEADER JOHN NETTLETON OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE WAS CALLED TO A SECRET CONFERENCE.
WE HAVE KNOWN ABOUT THE GERMAN DIESEL WORKS HERE AT AUGSBURG FOR SOME TIME, SQUADRON LEADER. BUT UP TILL NOW WE HAVE NOT HAD A PLANE WITH SUFFICIENT POWER AND SPEED TO REACH THE FACTORY. BUT NOW WE HAVE!
YOU MEAN THE LANCASTER BOMBER, SIR?

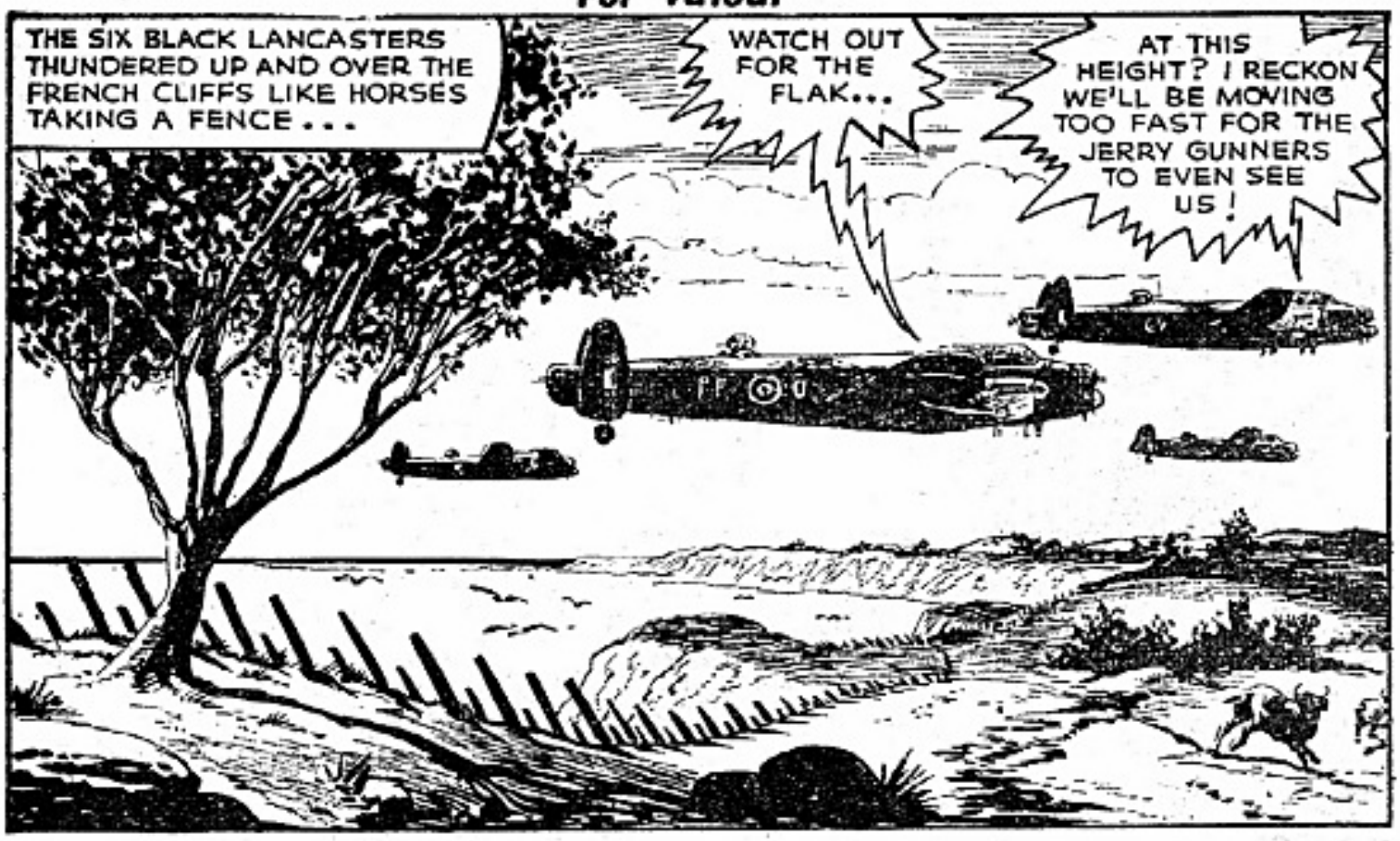
EXACTLY... THE LANCASTER! THE GERMANS HAVE BUILT A HUGE FACTORY AT AUGSBURG IN BAVARIA, WHICH IS SUPPLYING HALF THE ENGINES FOR THE U-BOATS OF THE GERMAN NAVY. THAT FACTORY IS YOUR TARGET... IT MUST BE DESTROYED!

IT WAS A HAZARDOUS UNDERTAKING... THE RAID WOULD HAVE TO TAKE PLACE IN DAYLIGHT AT LOW LEVEL. ON APRIL 17TH. 1942, THE PILOTS AND CREWS OF TWELVE LANCASTERS GATHERED IN THE BRIEFING ROOM OF A WIND-SWEPT AIR STATION IN ENGLAND...
TAKE-OFF IS AT FIFTEEN HUNDRED HOURS. YOU WILL FLY IN TWO FORMATIONS, THE FIRST ONE LED BY SQUADRON LEADER NETTLETON. THE SECOND SECTION WILL START THREE MINUTES AFTER THE FIRST...


AT THREE O'CLOCK THAT AFTERNOON, THE PILOTS SAT AT THE CONTROLS OF THEIR MIGHTY FOUR-ENGINED LANCASTER BOMBERS, WAITING FOR THE SIGNAL TO START. THE FIRST SECTION GATHERED SPEED ONE BY ONE AND LIFTED OFF THE RUNWAY LIKE HUGE LUMBERING BIRDS...
PT OK
...IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT THEY REACHED THEIR TARGET IN DAYLIGHT, IN ORDER THAT THEY COULD FLY HOME IN THE DARKNESS TO AVOID THE GERMAN FIGHTERS WHICH WOULD BE WAITING TO POUNCE ON THEM.

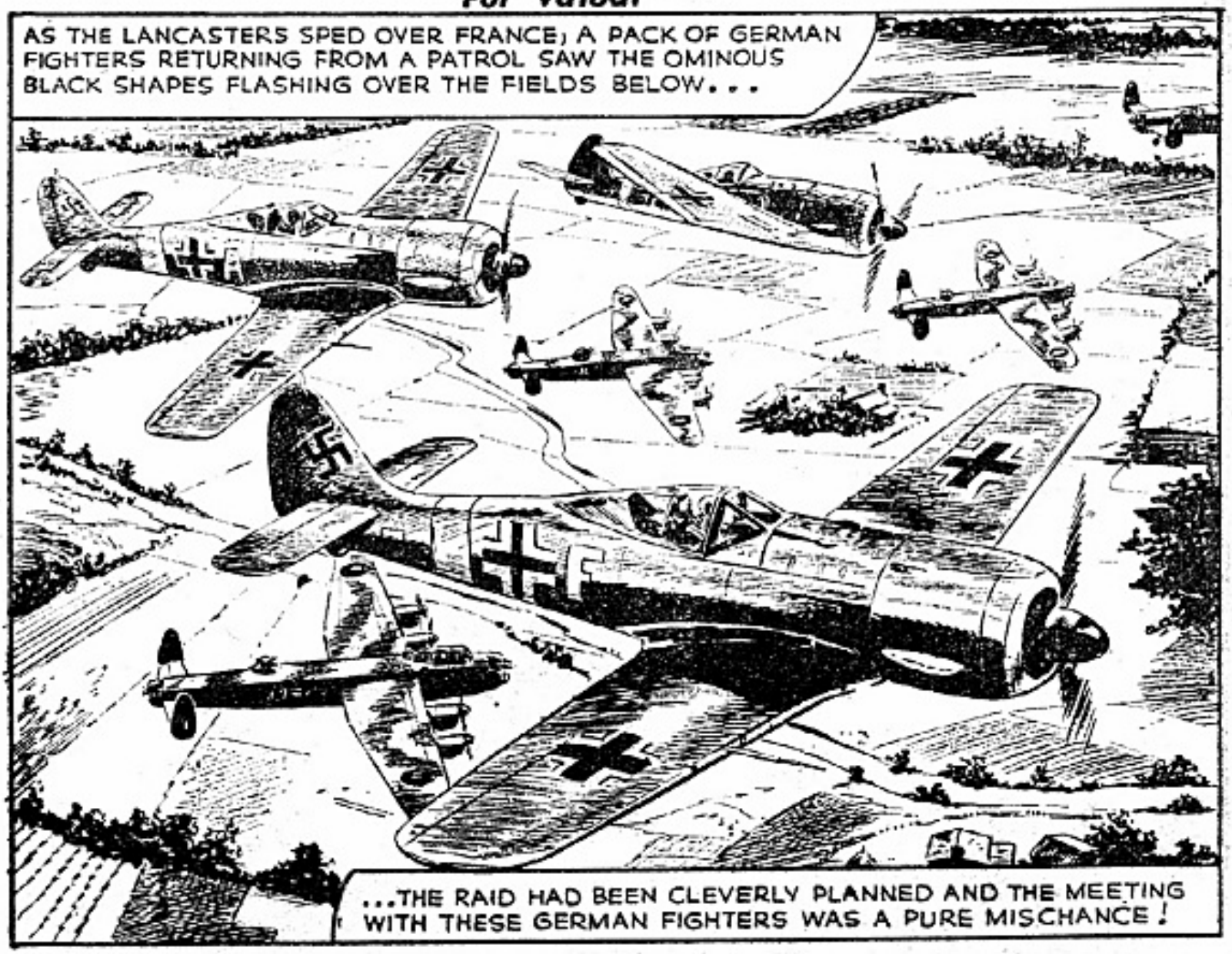
SQUADRON LEADER NETTLETON LED HIS HEAVILY LADEN PLANES SOUTH AT 500 FEET...
THE BOYS ARE KEEPING A NICE FORMATION. WE'LL DROP DOWN TO FIFTY FEET WHEN WE REACH THE COAST.
OKAY. IF WE KEEP DOWN TO ZERO FEET ALL THE WAY TO GERMANY, WE SHOULD DODGE ANY STRAY JERRY PLANES THAT MAY BE ABOUT.

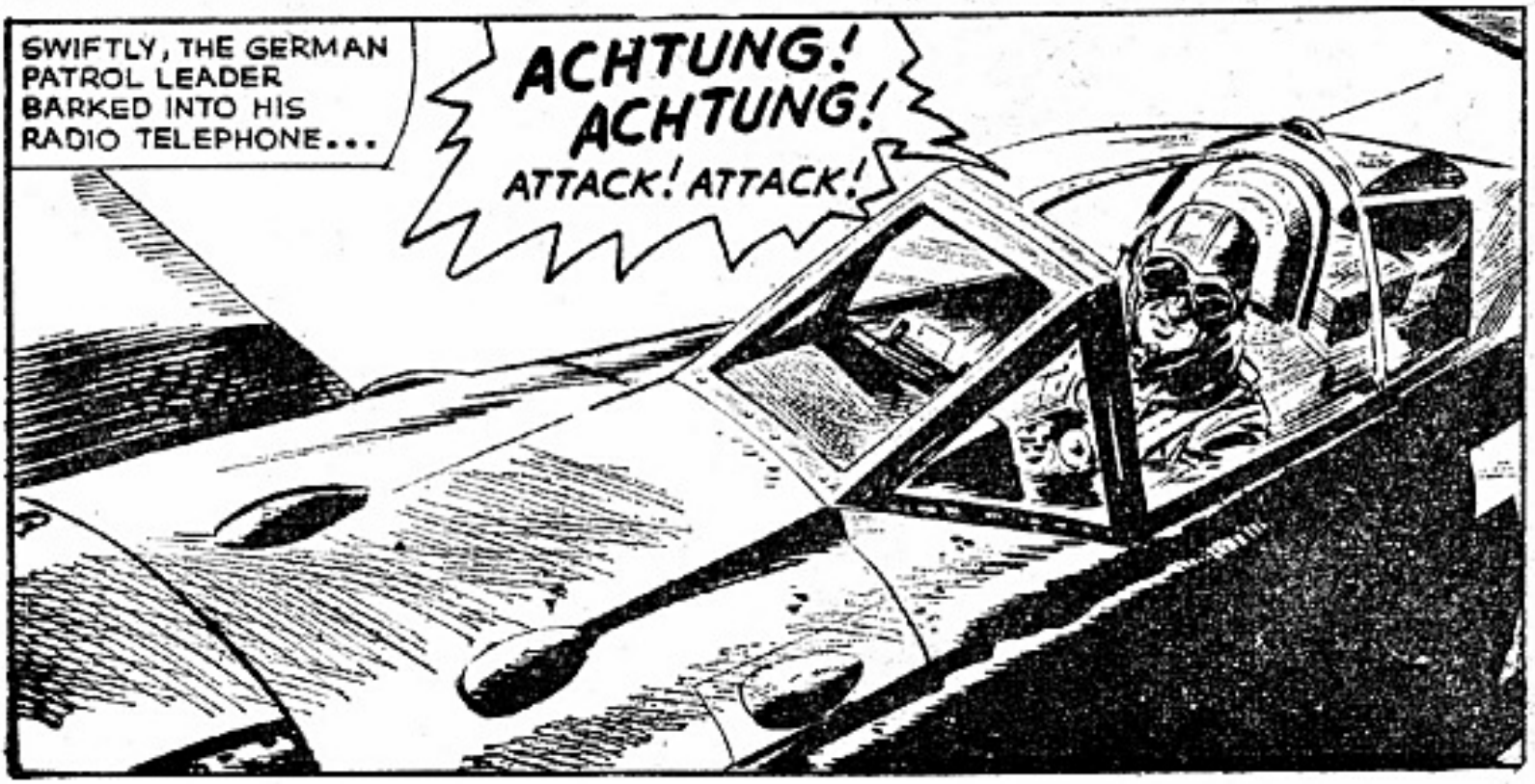

IT WAS A THOUSAND MILE FLIGHT OVER ENEMY OCCUPIED COUNTRY TO AUGSBURG AND BACK... BUT NETTLETON HAD WORKED OUT HIS PLANS WITH EXTREME CARE AND CALMLY ACCEPTED THE RISK....
PL K


THE SIX BLACK LANCASTERS THUNDERED UP AND OVER THE FRENCH CLIFFS LIKE HORSES TAKING A FENCE . . .
WATCH OUT FOR THE FLAK...
AT THIS HEIGHT? I RECKON WE'LL BE MOVING TOO FAST FOR THE JERRY GUNNERS TO EVEN SEE US!

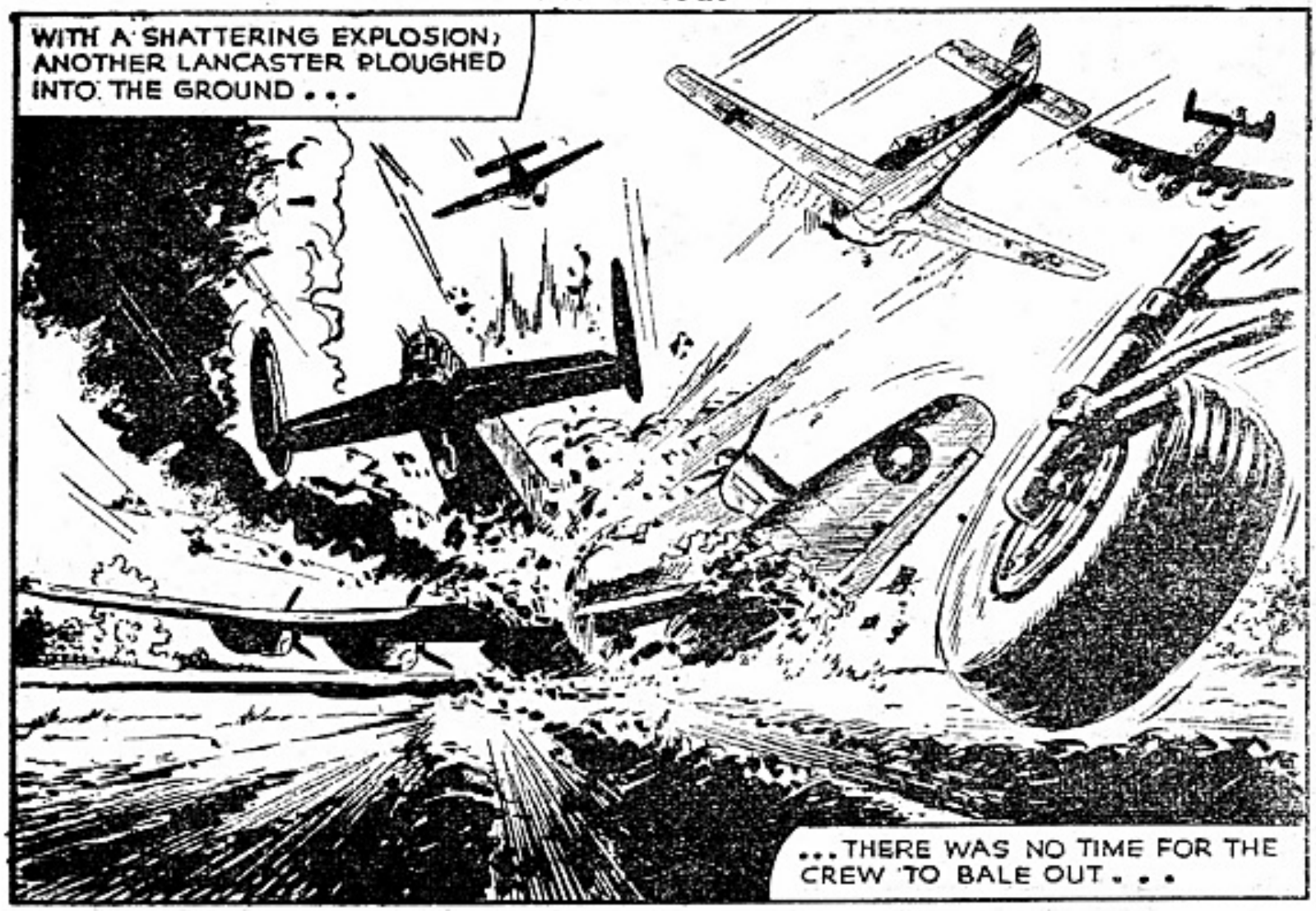
HUGGING THE GROUND AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE, THEY ROARED ONWARDS AT THREE HUNDRED MILES AN HOUR. SUDDENLY, AN AIRFIELD FLASHED BELOW THEM . . .
HEY! LOOK AT THOSE GUYS HOPPING IT! WE MUST BE A BIT OFF COURSE, SKIPPER. WE WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO FLY OVER AN AIRFIELD!

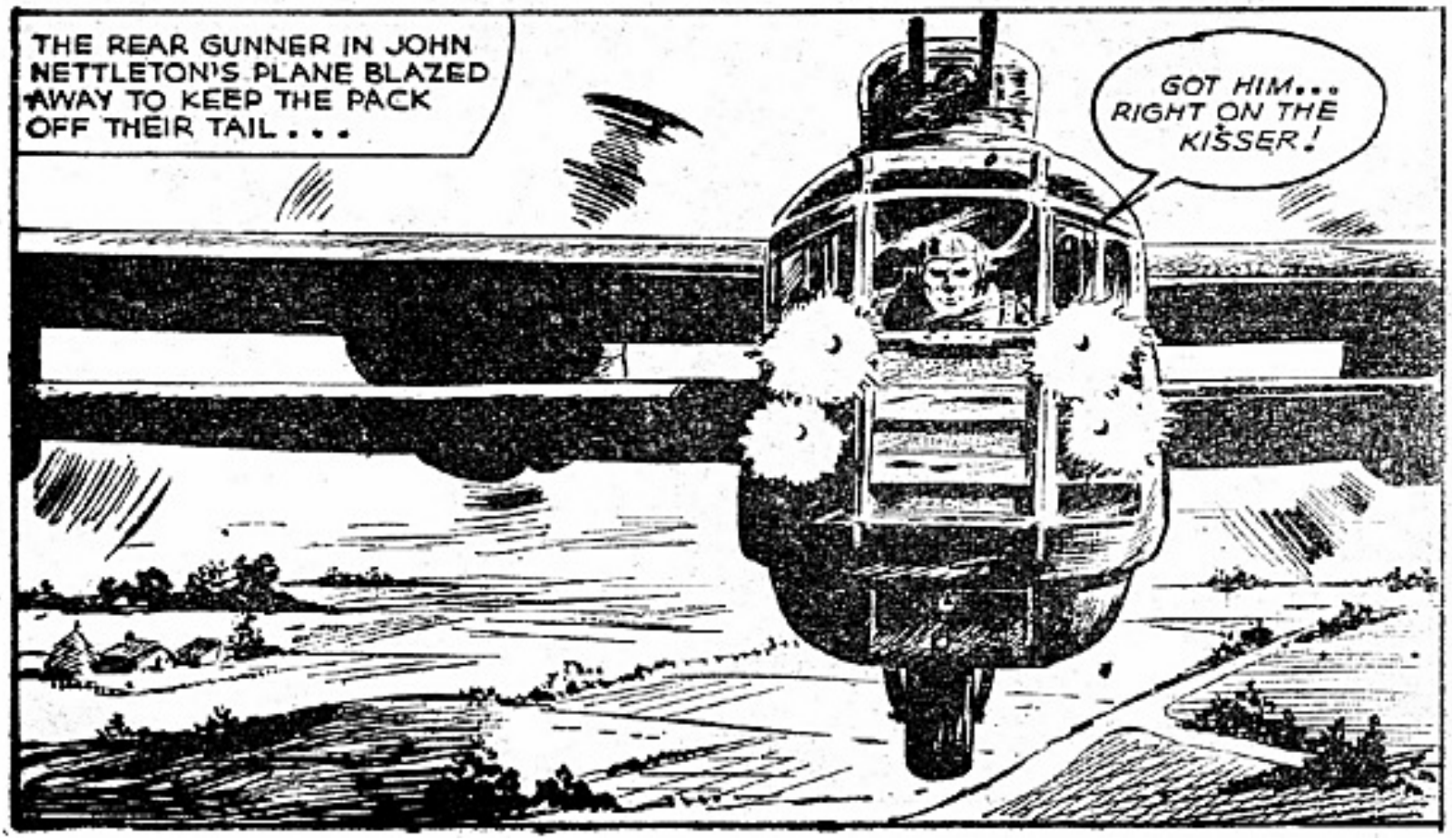
THE GERMANS RACED FOR THEIR GUNS...
...BUT THE LANCASTERS THUNDERED ON UNHARMED.

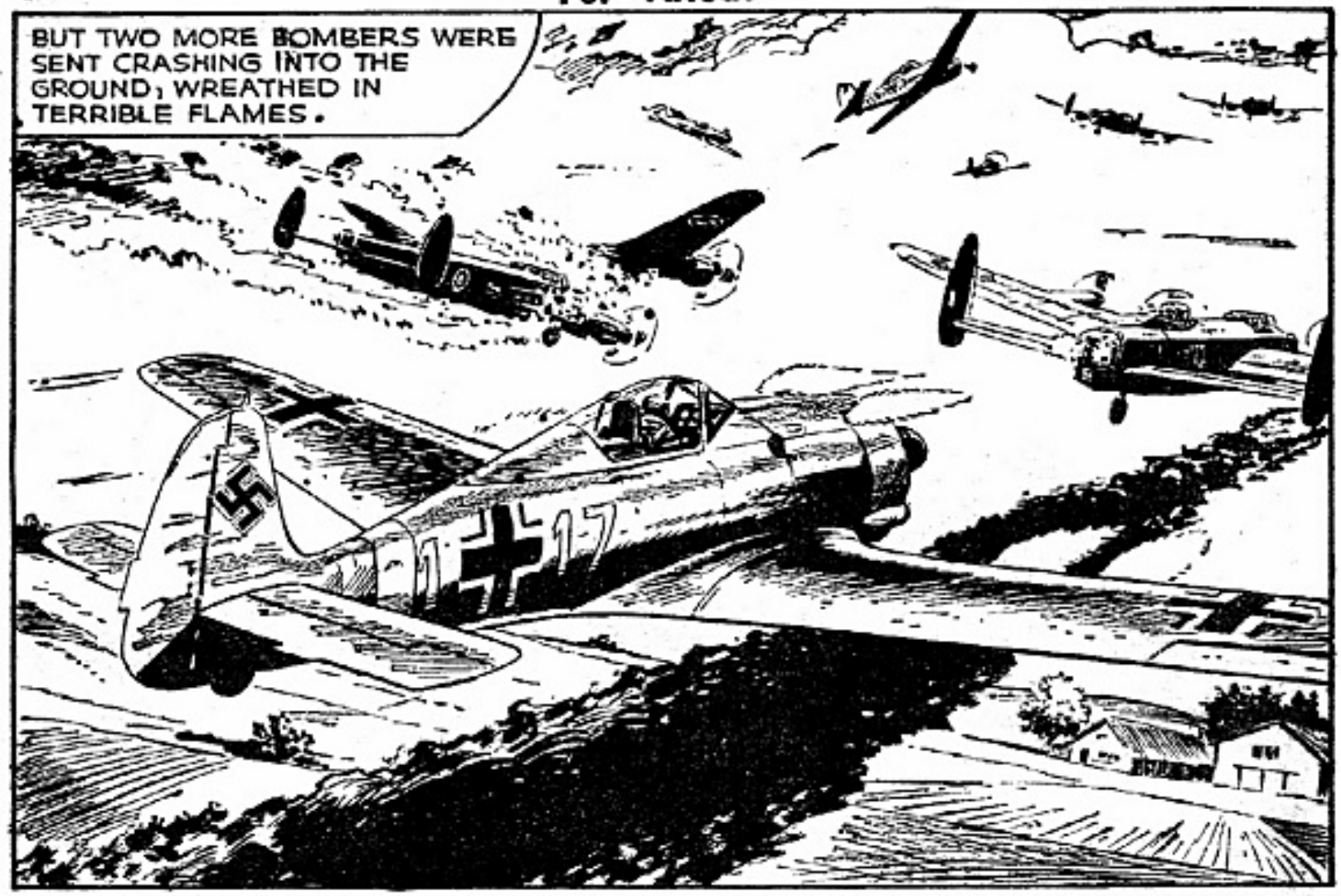

AS THE LANCASTERS SPED OVER FRANCE, A PACK OF GERMAN FIGHTERS RETURNING FROM A PATROL SAW THE OMINOUS BLACK SHAPES FLASHING OVER THE FIELDS BELOW...
...THE RAID HAD BEEN CLEVERLY PLANNED AND THE MEETING WITH THESE GERMAN FIGHTERS WAS A PURE MISCHANCE!


SWIFTLY, THE GERMAN PATROL LEADER BARKED INTO HIS RADIO TELEPHONE...
ACHTUNG! ACHTUNG! ATTACK! ATTACK!

THE GERMANS DIVED, THEIR GUNS SPITTING BULLETS AND CANNON SHELL. THE LANCASTERS FOUGHT BACK DESPERATELY, BUT THEY OFFERED HUGE TARGETS TO THE FIGHTERS AND STOOD LITTLE CHANCE AT THAT LOW HEIGHT...
PE OL


WITH A SHATTERING EXPLOSION, ANOTHER LANCASTER PLOUGHED INTO THE GROUND . . .
. . . THERE WAS NO TIME FOR THE CREW TO BALE OUT . . .


THE REAR GUNNER IN JOHN NETTLETON'S PLANE BLAZED AWAY TO KEEP THE PACK OFF THEIR TAIL . . .
GOT HIM . . . RIGHT ON THE KISSER!


BUT TWO MORE BOMBERS WERE SENT CRASHING INTO THE GROUND, WREATHED IN TERRIBLE FLAMES.

NETTLETON WENT FLAT OUT, TRYING TO SHAKE OFF THE ATTACKERS. THEY GRADUALLY TRAILED AWAY, THEIR PETROL TANKS PROBABLY EMPTY...
ONLY TWO OF US LEFT!

IN THE VERY TEETH OF DISASTER, JOHN NETTLETON'S UNSHAKABLE COURAGE BLAZED OUT. HIS TARGET WAS HUNDREDS OF MILES AWAY... THE DECISION TO GO ON OR TURN BACK WAS HIS ALONE...

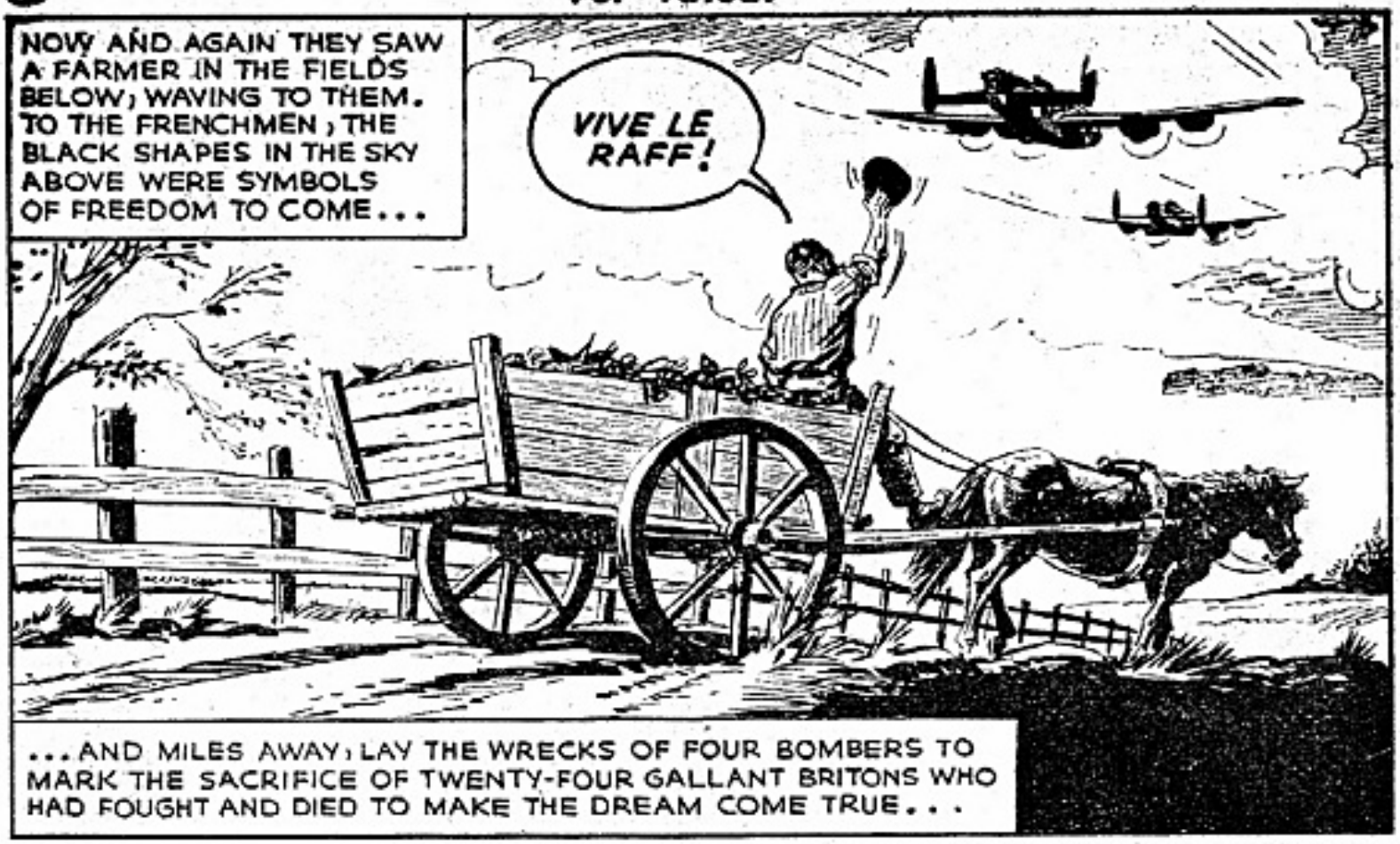
...BUT NOT FOR A MOMENT DID HE THINK OF TURNING BACK... ***HIS ORDERS WERE TO BOMB AUGSBURG!***

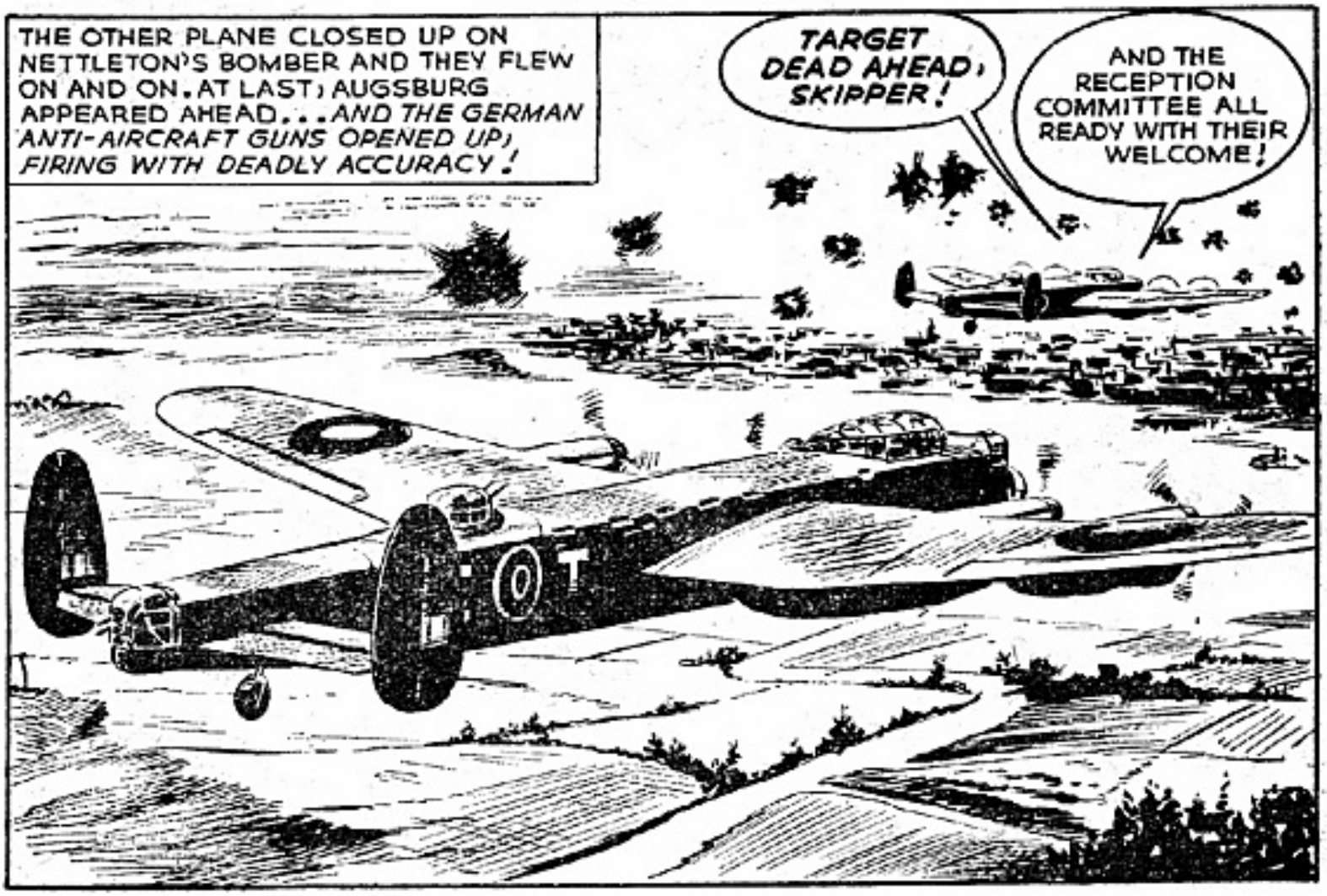
FOR AN INSTANT THE THOUGHT OF THE GOOD COMPANIONS WHO HAD GONE DOWN SHOOK HIM... THEN HE BRUSHED THE THOUGHT AWAY.

PILOT TO CREW... WE'RE GOING ON, CHAPS... TO AUGSBURG.

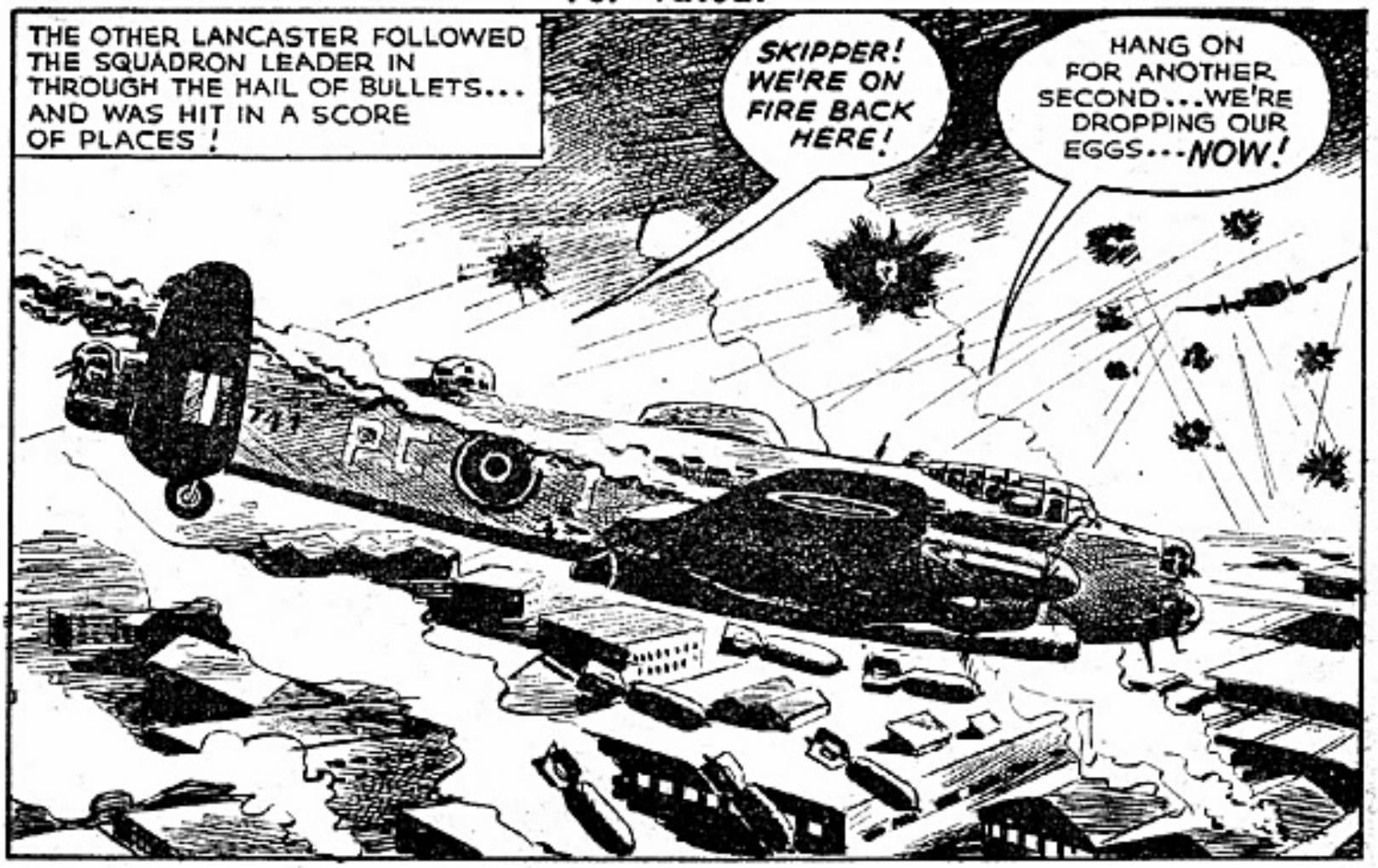
HIS LANCASTER THUNDERED OVER THE FIELDS... OVER HOUSES AND TREES, SWERVING TO AVOID AN OCCASIONAL CHURCH...

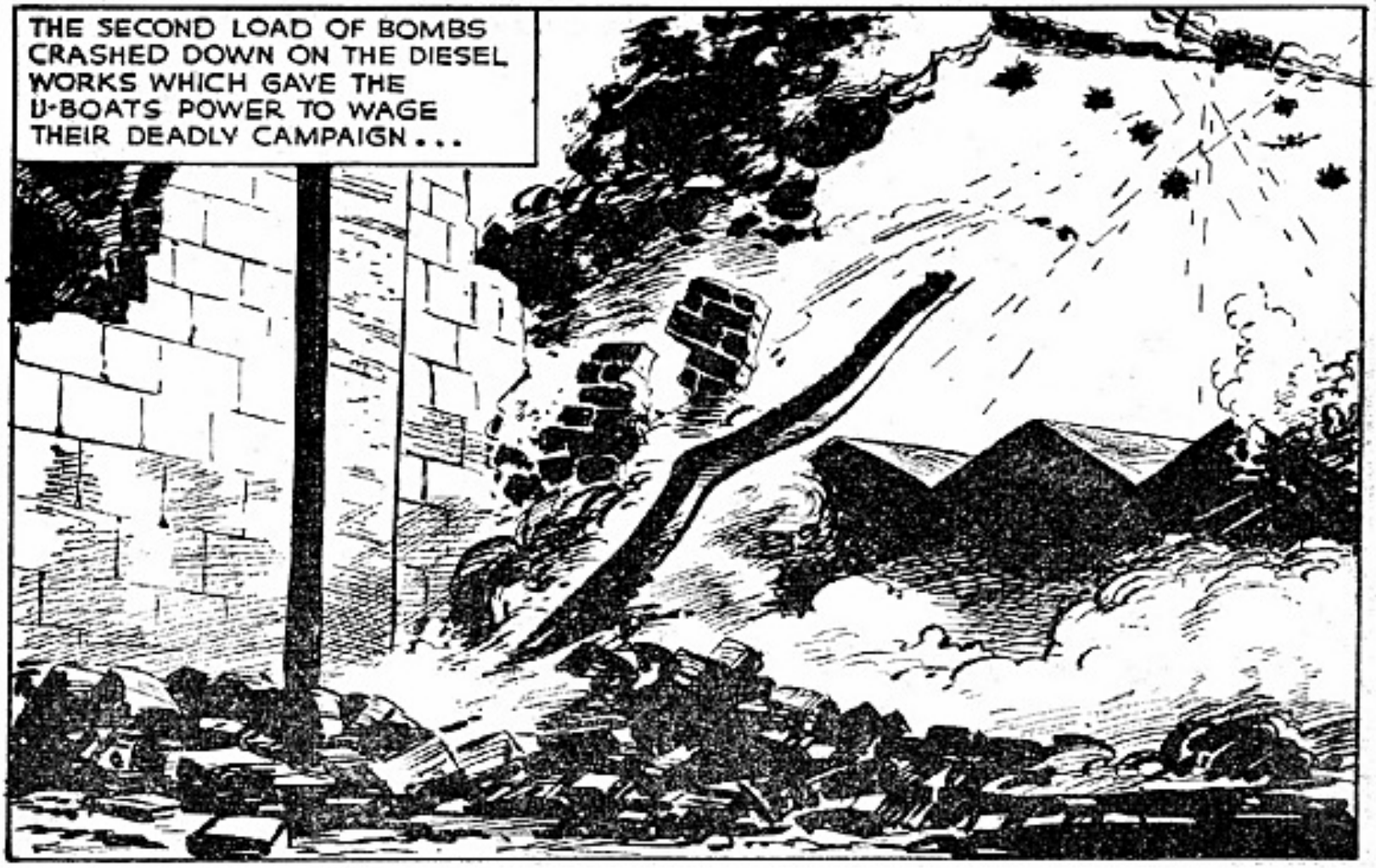
...IT WAS A LOVELY DAY. THERE WERE FEW PEOPLE ABOUT. FRANCE SEEMED TO BE DEAD.


NOW AND AGAIN THEY SAW A FARMER IN THE FIELDS BELOW, WAVING TO THEM. TO THE FRENCHMEN, THE BLACK SHAPES IN THE SKY ABOVE WERE SYMBOLS OF FREEDOM TO COME...
VIVE LE RAFF!
...AND MILES AWAY, LAY THE WRECKS OF FOUR BOMBERS TO MARK THE SACRIFICE OF TWENTY-FOUR GALLANT BRITONS WHO HAD FOUGHT AND DIED TO MAKE THE DREAM COME TRUE...


THE OTHER PLANE CLOSED UP ON NETTLETON'S BOMBER AND THEY FLEW ON AND ON. AT LAST, AUGSBURG APPEARED AHEAD...AND THE GERMAN ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS OPENED UP, FIRING WITH DEADLY ACCURACY!
TARGET DEAD AHEAD, SKIPPER!
AND THE RECEPTION COMMITTEE ALL READY WITH THEIR WELCOME!

NETTLETON FLEW LOW OVER THE ROOFS, SWEPT RIGHT ACROSS THE TARGET AND DROPPED HIS DELAYED-ACTION BOMBS IN THE CENTRE OF THE FACTORY... EXACTLY AS PLANNED!
BOMBS GONE!

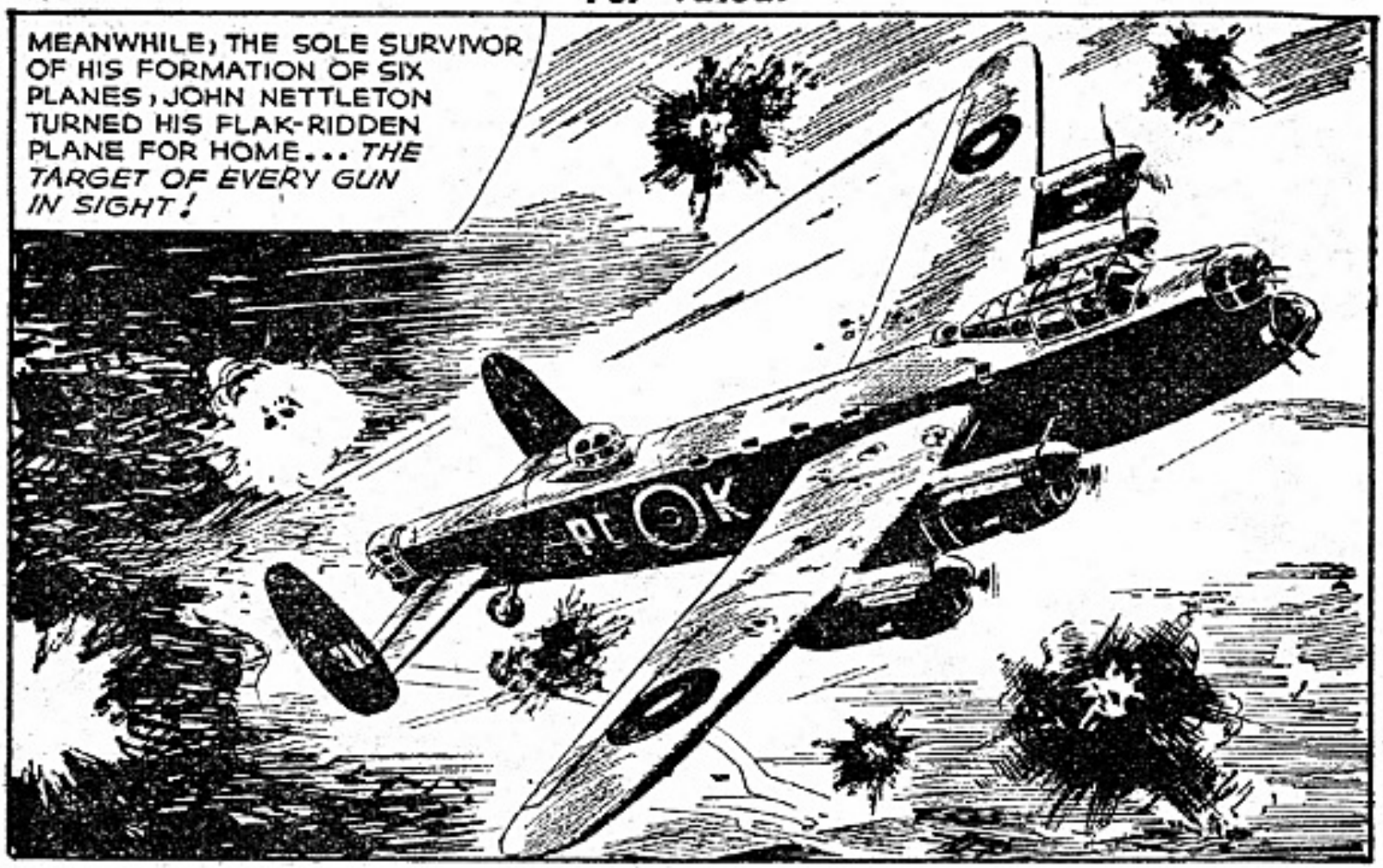

THE OTHER LANCASTER FOLLOWED THE SQUADRON LEADER IN THROUGH THE HAIL OF BULLETS... AND WAS HIT IN A SCORE OF PLACES!
SKIPPER! WE'RE ON FIRE BACK HERE!
HANG ON FOR ANOTHER SECOND...WE'RE DROPPING OUR EGGS...NOW!


THE SECOND LOAD OF BOMBS CRASHED DOWN ON THE DIESEL WORKS WHICH GAVE THE U-BOATS POWER TO WAGE THEIR DEADLY CAMPAIGN...

THE PILOT STRUGGLED TO KEEP THE LIGHTENED LANCASTER AIRBORNE...
IT'S NO GOOD, CHAPS. I CAN'T HOLD HER. IT'S TOO LOW TO BALE OUT...SO I'LL TRY AND PUT HER DOWN. STRAP YOURSELVES IN AND... HOLD TIGHT!

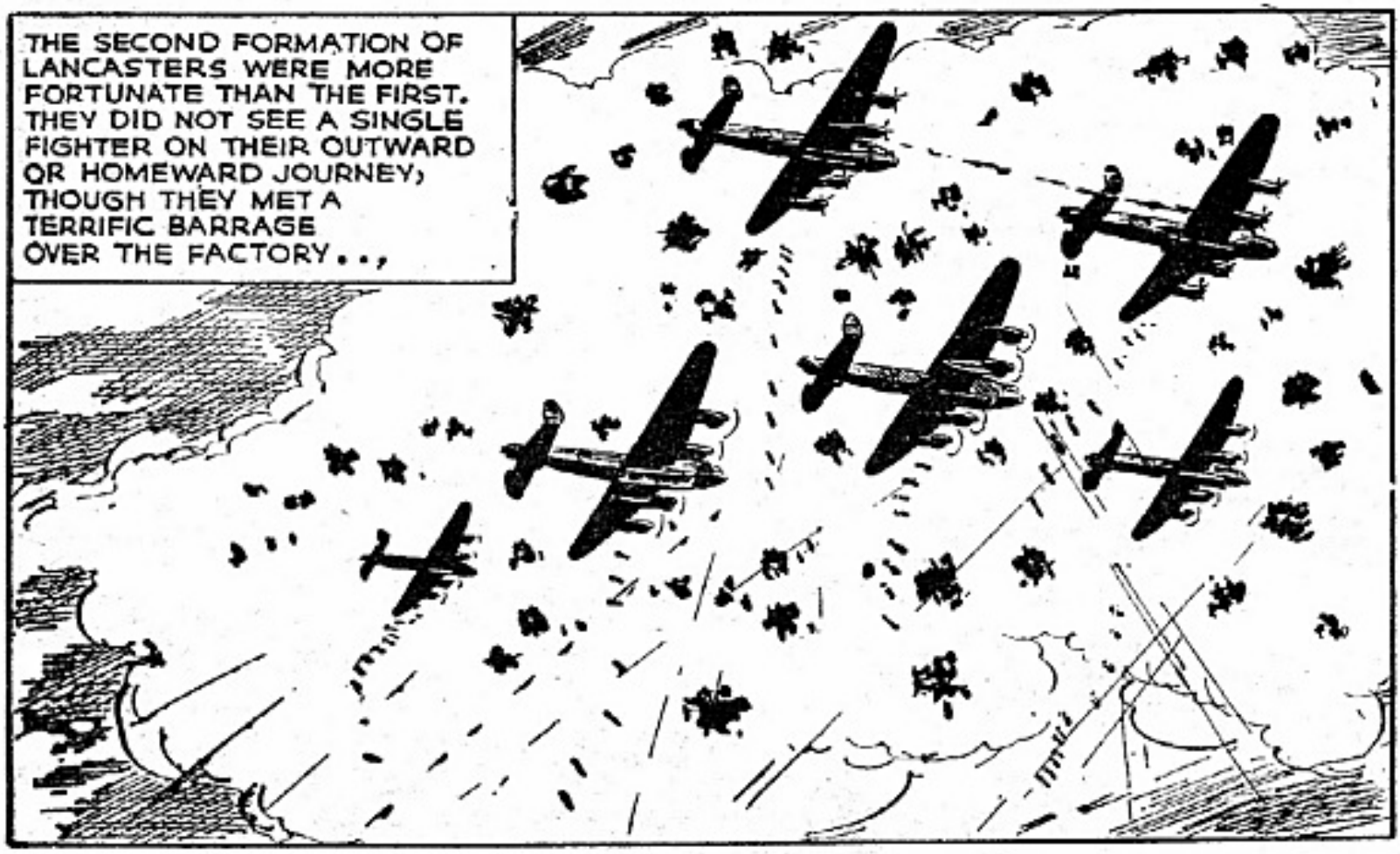
WITH THE LANCASTER ON FIRE AMIDSHIPS, THE PILOT FOUGHT WITH THE CONTROLS.. JUST BEYOND THE TOWN, HE MANAGED TO BRING THE CRIPPLED PLANE DOWN TO A CRASH LANDING.

THE CREW STRUGGLED OUT OF THE BLAZING PLANE AS GERMANS CAME RUNNING TOWARDS THEM...
SORRY, BLOKES ...LOOKS LIKE WE SPEND THE REST OF THE WAR BEHIND BARBED WIRE.
NEVER MIND, SKIPPER...WE'VE DONE OUR JOB! THOSE BOMBS ARE GOING TO GO OFF WITH A BLOOMIN' BIG BANG IN A LITTLE WHILE!


MEANWHILE, THE SOLE SURVIVOR OF HIS FORMATION OF SIX PLANES, JOHN NETTLETON TURNED HIS FLAK-RIDDEN PLANE FOR HOME... *THE TARGET OF EVERY GUN IN SIGHT!*
PL OK

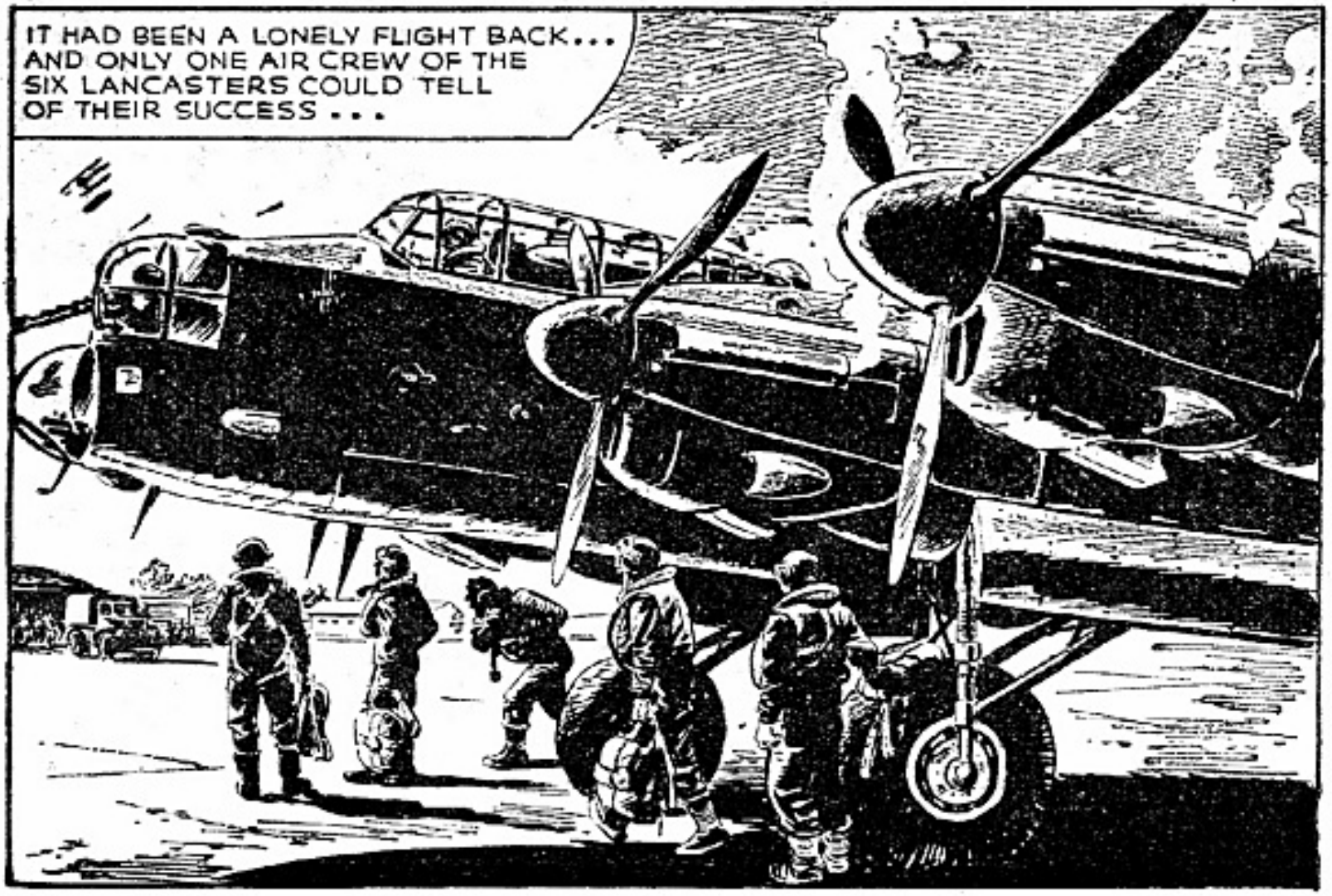
HOLED AND BATTERED, THE BOMBER SWUNG ROUND IN THE FADING LIGHT OF DUSK AND ITS NOSE POINTED TOWARDS ENGLAND...
I USED TO BE AFRAID OF THE DARK WHEN I WAS A KID... BUT I'M SURE WELCOMING IT RIGHT NOW! IN ANOTHER HALF AN HOUR THE JERRIES WILL NEVER SEE US.

AS DARKNESS CAME, THE HORSES OF SOME GERMAN GUNNERS SUDDENLY BOLTED IN ALL DIRECTIONS AS THE THUNDER OF THE LANCASTER STRUCK THEIR STARTLED EARS...


THE SECOND FORMATION OF LANCASTERS WERE MORE FORTUNATE THAN THE FIRST. THEY DID NOT SEE A SINGLE FIGHTER ON THEIR OUTWARD OR HOMEWARD JOURNEY, THOUGH THEY MET A TERRIFIC BARRAGE OVER THE FACTORY...,

WHEN THE DELAYED ACTION BOMBS EXPLODED SOME TIME LATER, THE DIESEL WORKS CRASHED IN BURNING RUINS...
...AND A TREMENDOUS BLOW FOR THE ALLIED CAUSE IN THE DESPERATE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC HAD BEEN STRUCK!

JOHN NETTLETON'S LONE BOMBER DRONED ON THROUGH THE DARKNESS... IT WAS HOURS LATER WHEN THE TIRED VOICE OF THE CO-PILOT CALLED OUT...
WE'VE MADE IT... THERE'S THE ENGLISH COAST COMING UP.


IT HAD BEEN A LONELY FLIGHT BACK... AND ONLY ONE AIR CREW OF THE SIX LANCASTERS COULD TELL OF THEIR SUCCESS...

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